

The Dialectics of Sexism

# NO MORE FUN & GAMES

ISSUE THREE

A Journal of Female Liberation





Dialectics of sexism: Sexism is the oldest form of institutionalized oppression. The roots of sexism have long been obscured by the dialectics of history. Different races have been oppressed for centuries at a time, but the subjugation of the female sex by the male has gone on for thousands of years. This is the basic difference between racism and sexism which must be taken into account when trying to analyze the underlying structure of sexism.

Eons of time and the dialectical interactions of civilizations have served to hide the caste oppression of females by means of ancient traditions, refined and modified or exaggerated and rigidified; customs of origins so remote they haven't been rationalized for centuries; ingrained psychological attitudes and many other factors, render sexism elusive to define.

Sexism can't be revealed by any superficial or traditional examination of society. There is no class analysis, study of imperialism, colonialism, racism, or caste systems that fully expose the concept of sexism. To understand the superstructure of sexism today, female liberation must re-examine the foundations of civilization.

Betsy Warrior

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## DIALECTICS OF OPPRESSION

We offer ourselves the possibility of a dangerous weakness if we allow ourselves to deplore or pity the plight of the oppressed. We tend to overlook the fact that oppression would not be possible if the oppressed refused to submit. There are always alternatives to oppression, though very often such unfortunate ones that there appears to be no choice. Greek tragedies are filled with the tales of those who chose death over immorality or submission.

Women have more alternatives than that of death, although they may to the young girl or woman seem to be equally as drastic. The young child senses that to be accepted she has only one path to take. Inherent in the desire to be accepted at such an early age (when most often the choice is made) is the desire not for the approbation of men, but for recognition as an individual. She seeks this fulfillment first from her parents. She perceives that her father is the ultimate authority since her mother also seeks his approbation. Yet the young girl's choice is greatly affected by that of her mother. If her mother has displayed excessive dependence on her husband, the child may scorn this lack of self-respect, suppress her need for affection and rebel against most forms of adult approbation. Or she may sense in her mother a hostility toward the authority of her husband and a desire to control more of her own life. In this case she would also scorn any form of dependence on men. But in most cases the child sees her mother strive for male approbation and senses the direct relationship between being acceptable to men and being accepted as a person.

From this point on, as she has chosen to do the only thing which will make her accepted, she works very hard to do this well. This is not to say that she oppresses herself, but that she has seen no strength or advantage in the alternatives. Her role has been established and she learns from then on through her parents, television, books, the media and her friends how she can perfect this role. This is what has been termed conditioning. The word *conditioning* excludes the factor that one can only be conditioned insofar as one desires to be accepted by those who condition.

In the past, no alternatives for women have been

condoned. Women have not been encouraged to work toward self-respect, self-approration and self-determinism. Those who are dedicated to encouraging this determination in women must be able to provide in their ideologies, analyses and behavior an example that will show the strength and respect involved in this choice.

Lisa Leghorn, October, 1969

*The relative rank, the hierarchy, of the sexes is first brought to her attention in family life; little by little she realizes that if the father's authority is not that which is most often felt in daily affairs, it is actually supreme; it only takes on more dignity from not being degraded to daily use; and even if it is in fact the mother who rules as mistress of the household, she is commonly clever enough to see to it that the father's wishes come first; in important matters the mother demands, rewards, and punishes in his name and through his authority....As a rule his work takes him outside, and so it is through him that the family communicates with the rest of the world: he incarnates that immense, difficult, and marvelous world of adventure;....If her father shows affection for his daughter, she feels that her existence is magnificently justified; she is endowed with all the merits that others have to acquire with difficulty; she is fulfilled and deified. All her life she may longingly seek that lost state of plenitude and peace. If the father's love is withheld, she may ever after feel herself guilty and condemned; or she may look elsewhere for a valuation of herself and become indifferent to her father or even hostile. Moreover, it is not alone the father who holds the keys to the world: men in general share normally in the prestige of manhood; there is no occasion for regarding them as "father substitutes." It is directly, as men, that grandfathers, older brothers, uncles, playmates' fathers, family friends, teachers, priests, doctors, fascinate the little girl. The emotional concern shown by adult women toward Man would of itself suffice to perch him on a pedestal.*

*Simone de Beauvoir  
The Second Sex*



## CASTE AND CLASS (excerpts)

I.

Why is it important to say that females constitute a lower caste? Many people would say that the term caste can only properly be used in reference to India or Hindu society. If we think that caste can only be applied to Hindu society, we will simply have to find some other term for the kind of social category to which one is assigned at birth and from which one can not escape by any action of ones own; and, at the same time, we must distinguish such social categories from economic classes or ranked groups.

A caste system establishes a definite place into which certain members of a society have no choice but to fit (because of their race, sex, or other easily identifiable physical characteristics or occupations). A caste system, however, need not at all be based on a prohibition of physical contact between different castes. It only means that this physical contact will be severely regulated, or will take place outside the bounds deemed acceptable by the society; it means that the mobility of the lower castes will be limited.

Under the caste system in the Southern states, physical contact between the races is extensive. In the South under slavery, there was frequent contact between black "mammy" and white child, between black and white pre-adolescent children, and between white master and black slave women. It was after the end of legal slavery that restrictions on contact between the races were extended; yet contact still exists.

Between male and female, thousands of taboos control their contact in every society. Within each, there is a "woman's world," and a "man's world." Men initiate contact with women, often for the purpose of exploitation; women have little freedom to initiate contact with adult males.

The clearest historical analogy of the caste status of females is African slavery\*in Anglo-America (the United States). To many, comparing the female's situation in general with that of a slave in particular seems far-fetched. Actually, the reason the analogy is indicated has to do with the caste status of the African in America, not with slavery as such.

Slave status does not necessarily imply caste status. The restriction of slavery to Africans in the British colonies rested on the caste principle that it was a status rightly belonging to Africans as innately (racially) inferior beings. If a person was black, he was presumed to be a slave unless he could prove otherwise. Caste was inclusive of the slave and free status, just as the caste status of women is inclusive of all economic classes, age, and marital status.

Caste, then, is not analogous to slavery. In Rome, where slaves were not conceived of as innately inferior, and did not differ racially from the enslaving group, slaves did not form a separate caste when they were freed. While they were slaves, however, they had no rights to property nor any legal rights. The master had the power of life and death over his slaves, just as in the slave South. As far as the legal category of the slave as property goes, Rome and America had a common social form. It was caste which produced the contrast between the effects of the two systems of slavery. It was the system of caste which gave African slavery in America its peculiarly oppressive character. That caste oppression is analogous to the situation of females both legally and traditionally. (When jurists were seeking a legal category for the position of African slaves in Virginia, they settled on the code of laws which governed wives and children under the power of the patriarch, the head of the family).

In order to fully understand the power relations of black and white in American society and of male and female in all human societies, we must understand the caste system which structures power, and within which caste roles we are conditioned to remain.

## II.

Often, in trying to describe the way a white person oppresses or exploits a black person, or a man oppresses or exploits a woman, we say that the oppressor treats the other person as a "thing" or as an "object." Men treat women as "sex objects," we say; slavery reduced black human beings to "mere property," no different from horses or cattle. This interpretation of caste oppression overlooks the crucial



importance of the fact that it is human beings, not objects, which the person in the higher caste has the power to dominate. Imagine a society becoming as dependent upon cattle as Southern plantation society was upon black people, or as men are upon women. The idea is ludicrous; the value of a slave as property lies precisely in his being a person, rather than just another piece of property. The value of the woman whom a man has rights over is much greater than the value of a machine or hired person to satisfy his sexual urges and fantasies, and to do his housework, tend his offspring. It is convenient for a man to have these needs satisfied by "his woman," but his relation to her as a person, his position of being of a higher caste, is the central aspect of his power and dominance over her.

(A further example of this non-object view which men have of women can be found in the way men view their sexual exploitation of women. It is not merely the satisfaction of a man's private, individual, sexual urge which he fantasizes he will get from some woman on the street. In addition, and more central to his view of women, he visualizes himself taking her, dominating her through the sexual act; he sees her as the human evidence of his own power. Prostitution, however exploitative, can never serve this same purpose, just as wage labor, however exploitative to the wage slave, could not have served the same purpose in Southern society that black slaves served.)

### III.

Black people fell under two patterns of dominance and subservience, which emerged under slavery, which are analogous to patterns of male-female relations in industrial societies. One pattern is the paternalistic one, (houseservants, livery men, entertainers, etc.) The second pattern is the exploitative pattern of the fieldhands. Housewives and women on welfare are subject to the paternalistic pattern. The exploitative pattern rules the lives of more than a third of the population of females (those who work for wages, including paid domestic work) in the United States. But it is important to remember that females form a caste within the labor force; that their exploitation is not simply double or multiple, but is qualitatively

different from the exploitation of workers of the higher castes--of males, particularly white males.

Though the paternalistic pattern may seem less oppressive or exploitative for females, it is actually only more insidious. The housewife remains tied by emotional bonds to a man, cut off from the more public world of work; she is able to experience the outside world only through the man or her children. If she were working in public industry, however exploitative, she could potentially do something about her situation through collective effort with other workers.

Even for women, however, who do hold jobs outside the home, their caste conditioning usually prevails, preventing them from knowing even that they have the right to work, much less ask for something more. Also, the jobs women are allowed are most often "service" and domestic ones, demanding constant contact with men or children. Females and blacks, even under the alienating capitalist system, are subject to the paternalistic pattern of caste domination every minute of their lives.

#### IV.

A caste system provides rewards that are not entirely economic in the narrow sense. Caste is a way of making human relations "work," a way of freezing relationships, so that conflicts are minimal. A caste system is a *social system*, which is economically based. It is not just some mistaken ideas which must be understood and dispensed with because they are not really in men's interest. No mere change in *ideas* will alter the caste system under which we live. The caste system does not exist just in the mind. Caste is deeply rooted in human history, and is the very basis of the present social system in the United States.

\*Note: When slaves were freed during the Civil War, the female slaves were included, but when the right to vote was in question, female blacks were excluded. They took a place beside unenfranchised white females.

Roxanne Dunbar



# CASTELIKE STATUS OF WOMEN AND NEGROES

## Negroes

### 1. *High Social Visibility*\*\*\*\*\*

A. Skin color, other "racial" characteristics.

B. (Sometimes) distinctive dress (and manners).

### 2. *Ascribed Attributes*\*\*\*\*\*

A. Inferior intelligence, smaller brain, less convoluted, scarcity of genius.

B. More free in instinctual gratification. More emotional, "primitive" and childlike. Imagines sexual prowess envied.

C. Common stereotype "inferior."

### 3. *Rationalization of Status*\*\*\*\*\*

A. Thought all right in his place

B. Myth of contented Negro

### 4. *Accommodation Attitudes*\*\*\*\*\*

A. Limitation on education; should fit "place" in society.

B. Confined to traditional jobs--barred from supervisory positions.

C. Deprived of political importance.

D. Social and professional segregation.

E. More vulnerable to criticism.

## Women

A. Secondary sex characteristics.

B. Distinctive dress (special codes of etiquette).

A. Inferior intelligence, smaller brain, less convoluted, scarcity of genius.

B. Irresponsible, inconsistent, emotionally unstable, lack strong super-ego, women as temptresses (more intuitive, irrational).

C. "Weaker" (Women as incomplete men).

A. Woman's place is in the home.

B. Myth of contented woman--"feminine." Woman is happy in subordinate role.

A. Limitation on education, should fit "place" in society

B. Confined to traditional jobs--barred from supervisory positions.

C. Deprived of political importance.

D. Social and professional segregation.

E. More vulnerable to criticism.

5. Discriminations\*\*\*\*\*

A. Supplicatory whining intonation of voice.

B. Deferential manner.

C. Concealment of real feelings.

D. Outwit "white folks."

E. Careful study of points at which dominant group is susceptible to influence.

F. Fake appeal for directive; show of ignorance.

A. Rising inflection, smiles

B. Flattering manner.

C. "Feminine wiles."

D. Outwit "menfolk."

E. Careful study of points at which dominant group is susceptible to influence.

F. Appearance of helplessness.

[From "Women as a Minority Group" by Helen Hacker, in *Social Forces*, Vol. 30, p. 65.]

\*\*\*\*\*

YOU DON'T HAVE A REVOLUTION IN WHICH YOU LOVE YOUR ENEMY. AND YOU DON'T HAVE A

REVOLUTION IN WHICH YOU ARE BEGGING THE SYSTEM OF EXPLOITATION TO INTEGRATE YOU

INTO IT.

MALCOLM X, 1964

## SUNDAY MORNING

The alarm rang at eight. She stirred, heard the cat outside the door and went back to sleep. She woke again at 8:45, turned on her back and then leaning on her elbows half sat up.

"Oh, darling, it's a quarter to nine. Come on, Stan, we'd better get up. You have to be there at ten don't you?"

"Uh."

"Come on, honey, get up and turn the heat on and I'll make your breakfast." She waited some time for the response and after several minutes it came.

"Uh."

"Stan, if you don't get up now you won't have time for breakfast." She waited again but there was no response issuing from beside her. "The cat is outside the door, hear her? I got up to take a pee before and I saw her sleeping on the laundry bag near the door. Should I let her in?"

"Ah ha."

She crawled out of bed to let the cat in thinking the cat could wake him more effectively and with fewer repercussions than she could. She opened the bedroom door and meant to run back to bed but the cat on seeing her started for the kitchen.

"O K, Cathead, which is it, do you want to cuddle or have breakfast?" She followed the cat down the hall, past the doorway, to the kitchen where the cat turned off, and into the living room. She turned up the thermostat, closed the window in the living room, left open for the cat, and went from there to the kitchen where she spooned some sardines from an already opened can into the cat's plate, then she hurried shivering to the bedroom.

He had turned over in bed and was lying kitty-corner across it so that it was impossible for her to enter it from either side. She pushed him gently. "Come on, Stan, move over so I can get in bed. I'm cold." He moved two inches more toward his side. "Come on, Stan, move. I can't get in." He moved two more inches and she attempted it only to find an unseen knee blocking all entry. By this time she was damn cold and, more, she was getting angry. The anger flooded over her, and though she resisted she was helpless. She had to



resist. Her anger was a quagmire. It would drag her down to frightening worlds of unreality, it would stay with her overpowering her, sapping her of self-respect, ambition, enthusiasm and even hope. "For Christ sake, move over will you?" And she gave him a violent push.

He moved just far enough for her to be able to lie down half in half out to the covers. "Come on, move over further." And he moved and then moved again. This time with his eyes open. "Come on, you're lying in the warm spot. It is cold here."

Finally she was comfortable but it was too late. She was still fighting. She thought of the work she wanted to do that day. She clung desperately to her story, to the notion of getting a good day's work done. She tried to relax her muscles, to control her breathing. Perhaps it wasn't too late. She'd go back to sleep. The hell with him. Let him get up late. But the heat was giving her a headache. It was meant for him. It was his little trick. Put on the heat and go back to bed, then argue with himself about whether ten minutes more sleep was worth a headache. And it was too typical of him. Why couldn't he have moved? She would have moved. She would have turned completely over even in her sleep. "Now just a minute. Would I? Maybe if I had wanted to cuddle I would have only moved over slightly thinking that when he got in I'd throw a leg and arm around him. Maybe if I were asleep I'd have done it the way he did without realizing. Maybe.. maybe..

She clung to her story. She had to control herself. Then suddenly there was a leg across her and an arm and a sharp chin penetrating painfully into her shoulder and he was breathing cold and somewhat foul breath into her face. She turned her head and there were cold but gentle blue eyes looking at her.

"Come on, Stan, I don't want to cuddle. Move over will you? Or get up. He moved his leg and arm but the painful chin, the breath and the blue eyes were still there. "Shit, Stan, move over." His chin dropped from her shoulder and lay on the mattress in contact with it. "Will you move over?"

"I have. For Christ sake I'm not even touching you. I just wanted to cuddle."

She moved herself. "Control, Control. He just wanted to cuddle. I can't get angry." The cat jumped

on the bed across his blanketed body to hers and moved up crouching, looking for her face, for the friendly morning rub of noses. She petted the cat a bit and it stretched and settled down near her stomach. She glanced over at the clock.

"For Christ sake, Stan, it is a quarter after nine and you have to be there at ten don't you?"

"A quarter to."

"Well, then, let's get up."

"O.K. O.K." He swung his legs to the floor and sat on the edge of the bed shaking his head for a few seconds, then he got up and stumbled into the bathroom.

She followed him out of bed, put on a warm robe, and started to make breakfast. "You won't have time to eat much, will you?"

"I'll have some prunes, cereal, toast and coffee."

She made the coffee and put his breakfast on the table. Then she got the morning paper from the porch and tried to decide what she wanted to eat. She had drunk too much the night before and her stomach was somewhat upset. An egg would taste good but she was on a diet. Was an egg more fattening than cereal? Supposedly not and yet she felt she gained weight with eggs. And she didn't like them soft boiled, at least not these storage eggs. She settled on a fried egg and opened the fridge to get the butter and eggs out.

"Jesus Baby. We're loaded with eggs. How come you aren't eating them anymore. I bought them for you and they are all going to go bad."

"O.K. I'll have two boiled eggs."

"You don't have time for them this morning."

"Don't you tell me what I can and cannot do. I'll have two eggs. You just put them on and I'll eat them. Let me worry about the time."

"O.K." she said, "But it will take time for the water to boil." And she wondered if he had set the clock ahead, and if so what time it really was. That was another little annoying habit of his. He set the clock up at night in order to fool himself in the morning. It was annoying because she never knew what time it was. She'd hop out of bed, make his breakfast, nag him to hurry until he yelled and screamed like a wild man, until he had frightened her so she was useless the rest of the day. And then he would sit down to a leisurely breakfast and proclaim that he had plenty of time, it was



really only so and so. He'd have his coffee and read his newspaper and if she dared to open her mouth he would look at her with those hard blue eyes, he would blanch, his skin would become taut, his lips would curl and he would look ready to leap across the table, grab her pajamas near the neck and start tossing her around.

Of course, he never did. And it wasn't necessary because to anyone with her background of family violence the look was enough.

She put the water on to boil, covering the pot to hasten the process and started to fry her own egg. Just as the water started to boil and as she held the egg in a tablespoon anticipatory to dropping it in the pot, he rushed past her clock in hand to the dinette, and said, "Forget about the eggs. I don't have time. I'll eat the prunes, go over to the base, pick up the duty then come back. Did you start them yet?"

"No."

"O.K."

He picked up the paper. Glanced at it. Ate his prunes and left. She finished cooking her egg, had her breakfast and read part of the Sunday paper. She took it leisurely. There was no point in hurrying. She could have gotten dressed and started again on the story. But why? He'd be home before she had anything done and he would talk before, during, and after breakfast. Writing with her was partly getting into the mood of the story and staying in it. She couldn't do that if he was yelling, "What the hell did you do with my handkerchief?" or informing her of what Drew Pearson had to say of saying, "Hey, here is an article you ought to read."

She had tried that before and she'd lost. Not to him but to the anger. Lost everything--temporarily at least--while, "Why can't he be considerate?" pounded through her head. And it would pound all day like the forerunner of a stroke.

So she waited and calmly too. Had a second cup of coffee and a third. She was in the bathroom when he came in singing,

"Hi, doll baby. Where are you?"

"I'm in the bathroom."

"O.K. I'm going to have breakfast. Where is the paper?"

"All of it? Where is the other one?"

"The other one got wet and I didn't take it in. The funnies are out there. You want to take the sports section from me to read meanwhile?"

"No, I'll read the funnies and wait 'til you're through."

She came out of the bathroom a minute later. It was even difficult for her to shit with him at home because she never knew when he was going to burst into the bathroom and want to read a "fascinating" article to her.

"Where is the paper?" he yelled. "Why didn't you bring it out?"

"I put it down of the chair in the living room."

"Oh ya, I see it."

And before she put her robe back on and walked to the dinette he started. "Did you read Drew Pearson today?.. Say, the news is really popping, isn't it? I don't know what we are going to do about Formosa..."

She poured another cup of coffee and sat down at the table to read the society section. The only part of that small, small-town paper she hadn't yet read. In desperation she even read the movie advertisements. And suddenly she came across a foreign movie. A foreign movie in this town! It didn't matter how good it was. It was an oasis in the desert of Americam shoot-em-ups.

"Heh, look, Stan. A foreign movie. I think it's Scotch. At least I think it's a foreign movie. It looks like one. Gee, Stan, a foreign movie. We'll see it, won't we?"

His head came up from behind the morning paper and there was that look. He might have said, "Movies, movies. That's all I hear. You always want to go to movies. Trying to keep me from my work. What the hell did I marry anyway, a silly imbecilic movie fan? He could have said that but he didn't. His expression did. At least to her.

Instead he asked who was in it and she read off the cast. "It it a shoot-em-up?" he asked next.

"Yes, it looks like it from the picture. At least there is a picture of one man hitting another."

"Well, we'll see. Maybe we'll go." And he went back to his paper.

She hadn't meant that night. She was just enthused. And she couldn't take the expression. "Well, don't get your ass in an uproar," she said, and went back to



the paper. There had been nothing hostile in her comment. She might as well have said, "Don't give me that look," because that was what she meant.

But he took her words differently; slowly he turned and with his full blown threatening and sarcastic debating tone said, "I never get my ass in an uproar."

She lit a cigarette. Fought against the anger. Fought against the temptation to explain, to criticize. There had been too much of both. Each led into lengthy discussions in which she got lost, in which her tongue got tied, in which her head pounded and her chest almost split. Each led her through a downpour of tears, through a maze of frustration to the next lowest level of existence. She couldn't seem to climb up now, sometimes she thought never, but she wasn't going and further down.

She left the table and started into the kitchen for more coffee although she didn't want any. She had to move though, she had at least for a moment to get away from the sound of crunching rice crispies eaten with the mouth open. And as she left the room she glanced sideways at him and she saw him rolling something between his thumb and third finger. She knew what it was. Snot. He liked to pick his nose and roll the snot around between his fingers until he was able to flick it off into space. Just a habit. And her stomach turned ever so slightly. But what was the point of saying anything again. She knew the look and she knew it would come. She knew that more surely than she knew anything.

She returned to the table and watched him finally finish the paper. Almost finish his cup of coffee. She thought of getting dressed ,getting ready to work, but he had to change out of his uniform too and she didn't want to have to wait after being dressed to work. She knew he might, probably, would loiter, that it would make her angry. And she could not afford the anger. It was, she knew, her worst enemy. The most alert--the never tiring.

"Well, what are you going to do, honey? What are your plans?"

"I'm going to finish breakfast, change clothes, read your story, and go back to the office."

"Read my story?" she couldn't help smiling. She had wanted him to do so so desperately the night before. She wanted only a word of encouragement. She had asked

him early in the evening before they went back to the office. She had asked him again when they returned from the office, but he was too tired he said to "criticize." "Couldn't I do it in the morning?" No, she didn't want him to read it now. She had to pound it out first into shape. He was likely to criticize--without thinking, about a phrase, grammar, a sentence. He was liable to say something like, "I think you ought to write it in play form." Just say it, that's all. He had too much of his own work to do to think how it might be made into a play. What to put where and when. Or he might laugh at the spelling--the typographical error. And if she complained that this wasn't the kind of criticism she wanted there would be that look. No, she didn't want him to read it now. If he did she might never have a story.

"That's all right. You don't have to read it."

"But you wanted me to last night."

"It doesn't matter anymore. I'll just do it the way I've started."

"OK. If you don't want me to I won't. I only meant I'd finish eating, give you your option as to whether I read it or not. I meant to say that if you wanted me to I would read it."

He had misunderstood the smile and he was testy.

"No, it's alright. I'll just do it the way I started to."

He went back to his coffee and the paper. He was rereading. But she felt it was safe now to get dressed. He was going to change and then he was going to work.

She stood over the floor furnace getting into the same things she had taken off the night before. And then he asked, "Hey, where is that new *Reporter*? And he found it and settled down to read over more coffee. She was dressed now and felt vaguely trapped. She returned to the table, cleared it, sat down opposite him and lit a cigarette. She looked past him out of the window and saw snow. It had only snowed there once before and that had thrilled her, now she just sat feeling homesickness, loneliness, and despair. She thought of home, of the snow, of the Sunday mornings at home. The steamed windows, the warmth inside, her family, the Sunday breakfasts of lox and bagles. And she thought "It is easier for him here. These people are more like the ones he has known all his life. He



doesn't miss the lox and bagles." And then she thought of something Dr. Sherman had said about mixed marriages and she wondered if it would have been any different in Fort Smith if she were married to a Jew. But she shook herself. "What's the matter with me? It's not him. It's the place. I want to go home. Home." And home meant Chicago. She knew she ought to go to California and be with her mother when they got out. She knew that she didn't get along well with her brothers and sisters in Chicago. She knew all the problems it would create and yet more than anything else in the world she wanted to go back to Chicago, to the city, the city she came from, and she wanted to stay there until she became a human being again.

And then she thought "You Can't Go Home Again." She shook herself once more. She had to work. Dreaming was dangerous. She could only write and write and write.

He was in the midst of his second *Reporter* article. She calmly, timidly, softly broached the topic again. "Well, what are you going to do, honey?" If you just want to read the *Reporter* and then you are going back to work anyway, couldn't you read there?" He looked up sarcastic and bitter again. "Do you think that it would be too terribly exacting a thing if I sat here for a few minutes and finished this article and my coffee?"

The sand was getting quick now and she tried, oh she tried to be calm. "No." She said it, and meant it, and left the table. He had a right to read. Good God, he had a right to sit at his own table. And yet it was afternoon, he still had to change clothes. He'll leave when he finishes the article she said to herself. I can't get angry, I won't get angry. She walked to her study and glanced at the half-filled page in the typewriter. She spent quite sometime thinking about how she would fill the rest of that page. And then came his voice and she heard him moving.

"Where are the rest of these *Reporter's*? I want to keep them all in one spot...Didn't the DeRivera's return our *Foreign Affairs*? But I don't see it. Where is it?...We are missing one." He was straightening the magazines. God, God, he was cataloguing them.

Searching the house for missing copies. Now. He was doing it now.

It was too much for her. She felt heat diffuse upward through her body. Something was caught in her throat and her eyes watered. She answered his questions one by one. The hope of work was leaving her and yet she fought desperately for hope, for calm. She picked up a book and started to read. It was difficult but she had to read. She had to read and stay calm. He had his rights. It was her and the anger. She had to stay calm.

She finished one short story. She started another and he came storming belligerently by. He was angry and he had that slightly wild, slightly mad look about him. "Alright. Alright. I'll go. I'll go. You don't have to kick me out of my own house."

She put down her book. She tried, and successfully, to fight the tears. There had been too many tears. She was drowning in her tears. She spoke in a low and even voice. "I'm not throwing you out, Stan; I only asked if you could please read at the office since you are going there anyway. If you want to stay home and read I wish you'd say so and I'll make my plans accordingly."

"Shit! You're really it. You throw me out during the day but let it get dark and you blow your top if I'm not home."

"Now wait a minute, Stan. I admit I have a lot of very difficult idiosyncricies. I'm afraid of the dark and I don't like to stay alone once it is dark. But I haven't made you stay home. I've gone back over to that office with you every night and you know it. And about throwing you out during the day, I'd be happy for you to stay if you were going to talk to me, if we were both going to stay home and read. But you just want to stay while you read and then leave me to go back to the base. Well, this is where I work. This is my office, and it just so happens I can't work with you here."

"Oh, for Christ sake I was so quiet you couldn't even hear me."

"I knew you'd get up and change clothes and start talking to me."

"God damn it, you're always criticizing me and telling me to change. It doesn't bother me to have you around



when I work. Why the hell don't you try to change a little bit? I've got a right to have a leisurely breakfast and read the paper in my own home on Sunday, haven't I?"

"Yes, you have that right. And I am trying to change."

"Ya, how?"

"I'm trying to work again and I'm trying to stay calm."

"Ya?" He'd been changing his clothes while walking from the bedroom to the doorway of the study. Now he disappeared into the bedroom and said nothing more.

She picked up her book again but couldn't read. She kept thinking things like, "Sure he can work with me around. But if he couldn't I'd leave him alone."

And writing scientific articles for professional journals is a different thing from just writing. He isn't in any panic. Look at what he has published and look at the ego support. He's considered a big mogul and every day people come down to ask his advice. And he talks to people. God, he talks to people while I sit in this house alone day after day. If I don't write I'll go crazy. And when he is home, does he talk to me? That isn't fair--of course, he does. Oh, Christ, maybe I'm already crazy. But he doesn't talk, he lectures."

He rushed past from the bedroom to the living room. "Well, I'm going to have another cup of coffee and go. That ought to make you happy."

"I don't care whether you go or stay."

"Jesus, you're crazy. You don't care, only a minute ago you couldn't wait 'til I left."

"I don't care," she said, and silently added "now." And she thought of all the times he had stayed just long enough to kill that delicate spark of enthusiasm, of confidence, and then he'd get up, say, "Well, I'm going," and give her a casual peck on the nose.

She tried to read. It was no longer a matter of staying calm enough to write. It had become a matter of not going blind mad. Of being able to distinguish the real from the unreal. Of being able to remain or become sane. Being able to hold on to that shred of sanity.

She could hear him moving about, making more noise than necessary with everything he touched. He slapped



his coffee cup down, slapped the magazines down, slapped the coffee pot down. And he was staying, staying, staying. He was only doing it to be perverse now. How many times he had told her not to push him or he'd get negativistic. He would do just the opposite of what she wanted him to do. Do it even when it was to his disadvantage because he knew it would hurt her more than it would hurt him. He'd leave because he wanted to work, but he was waiting now. Waiting for the fight, for the tears. Waiting for her to humiliate herself again, to beg psychological illness, to apologize for having to work in solitude, to tell him all over again about the thin wall her writing created between health and madness. To tell him that he was healthy, intelligent, well-trained and successful. To tell him that she was perhaps none of those, that this small town robbed her of her profession--that she was trying to start anew on something she could do here. To tell him that this stinking Southern town had robbed her of all human contact--that he was her focal point of contact with reality. He had to understand--to be considerate. And she didn't blame him. It was circumstance. He had to serve his tour with the Army. But he was still doing nothing but research--his, not the Army....

He was waiting. But she was going to wait too. There will be no fight today she kept saying to herself. He'll go. I won't be able to work for the rest of the day but I'll read. I won't humiliate myself again.

She closed the door to her study and picked up the book again. But once the door was closed the fear became overwhelming. Her heart pounded in her head. She couldn't think at all and her mouth was uncomfortably dry. She remembered the times he had swung open doors, stood before her, his fists clenched at his sides, his body stiff. He would gnash his teeth and have that mad look in his eyes. He'd take a step or two toward her, his body moving in rigid tremors, and he would either threaten physical damage or just scream with his whole trembling body. A terrific, horrendous, ghastly, unnatural scream.

He had never struck her and he said he never would. Of course, it was difficult for her to believe that. Once he was so out of control how did he know what he would do? How could anyone know? But what difference

did it make? It wasn't the blow she was afraid of-- it was the prologue. It was that which reached back into her past--that which had the power to frighten her near insanity. His sudden, uncontrolled, irrational mad anger.

And as she sat there looking at the door she remembered another time and another man in her family who did smash through a door, and she remembered the beating and the blood. She remembered so much sudden, unexpected, bewildering rage and violence. And she sensed somehow that it was the withdrawal to maintain integrity that set them off.

She tiptoed to the door. Opened it with a trembling hand and hoped against hope he had never noticed it's being shut. Then she went to the bathroom. She heard him put down his magazine and he walked into the bathroom. "I'm going now," he said and kissed her on the nose as she sat on the stool. He walked out of the house and left before she had said a word or even moved.

When he was gone it became even worse. She glanced at the unfinished portion of her story in the typewriter. She realized it was hopeless and walked to the cupboard for the sherry. And suddenly it became he, he who was standing in her way, making her ill. She went over all the old arguments. Over and over. He said that when he got angry it was because she was making demands on him and his time but that she got angry when he wasn't demanding anything of her at all. And she thought about the time she had asked to be allowed--asked to be allowed--to go home for a week. And she remembered his anger and his answer. If she did she need never come back. Yet going home for a week was placing no demands on him or his time. He didn't have to go with her. But she couldn't stand the loneliness any more. He worked always and forever and she had to talk to someone.

And so she drank and brooded and the sherry turned to whiskey. But the truth could do no more than fade in and out. She kept trying to see things from his point of view and he had long since pronounced--she was sick, dependent, paranoid.

Beverly Jones

Hey little woman  
Please make up  
Your mind.  
You've got to  
Come into my world  
And leave your world behind.

You've got to  
Come down from that cloud, girl  
And leave your world behind.

from a popular song by Bobby Sherwood

"Nothing is for nothing, as they say, and along with the wall-to-wall antiques and the joint checking account comes--let's call it by its name--self-sacrifice. What you sacrifice on the alter of marriage and motherhood is ... yourself. Does that surprise you? No matter what bargains you may make with your husband-to-be before you are married, one moment after you're married, your life as you is over. From that ecstatic "I-pronounce-you" moment on you are, as your name implies, Mrs. Him... He is the pebble dropped into the pond. You are only the waves radiating out from him. He is the impetus. You are the reaction. For a high-spirited, eager-to-achieve young woman this is not exactly an ego-building situation. Marriage, I fear, is not designed to build ego. At least not yours.

from "Marriage and Motherhood are for the Birds"  
by Yvonne Young Tarr, Sept. 66, *Cosmopolitan*



## THE MAN'S PROBLEM

Male supremacy reigns in the United States and Europe. The disease still exists in socialist countries despite a philosophy to the contrary. Men are the oppressors of women in private and public situations. Where men are oppressed, they are oppressed by other men. They fill all the political power positions in this corrupt system. Women form a lower caste in a still rigid caste system, and their economic situation has worsened rather than improved in the past decade (just as it has for black people). Most women come from the working class in the lowest positions in the labor force, or they are domestic servants and mistresses for males (husbands) who possess property, among which property women are counted and highly valued. Like a black person who has "made it," a woman who has "made it" is subject to the same social and economic humiliations as the commonest woman if she leaves the small protective kingdom of her triumph (usually the family). A woman alone on the street or in a public place is fair game for any man, for being the property of none, she becomes the property of all or any.

No man plays a passive role in the oppression of females. The caste system could not function another day unless men vigorously acted out their oppressive roles, took their rewards for granted and stomped on women. Men not only support the caste system; they are terrified of losing any part of it. A bare rumbling from women is exaggerated to the scale of an army of castrating amazons. Men are threatened by women speaking about their freedom just as the racists fear the freedom of black people. To the man, in the absence of social and economic power, woman's freedom literally means his loss of freedom. For his only justification for existence lies in his *being a man*, which means possessing the right to oppress a woman (in the family) and feel superior to women in general.

The history and training of the male develops in him a serious deficiency. But it is difficult to comprehend for one who is not programmed in that way (women and black people in this society). The deficiency can be termed "weakness," "false consciousness," "stupidity" or "paranoia." There are many terms which indicate that men are debilitated and diseased by their training as men (as opposed to the idea that men are *oppressed by their programming to the man's role*). Many men go insane from the

aggressiveness which is trained into them. Almost all acts of violence committed in this society are by men. Women are not the sole receptors of the violence, but they are now the only group of people who do not believe they have the right to defend themselves.

Females or black people who are programmed to a similar aggressiveness are as thoroughly diseased and maddened as males in those roles. So neither racial inferiority nor male genes can account for the white man's sickness.

We must pose the question: "How then does one deal with madness?" Obviously, the person who is the object of aggressive energy, as women are for men, cannot be the therapist. Every action of a woman is a threat to a man. Men are obsessed with their fears of the female-especially *femaleness* in themselves. Men also have the peculiar problem of dealing with their fears of being tainted with the "blood" of the lower caste, since all males are born of women.

The insane rationale of men's reactions to the slightest objections of women to accept the identities forced upon them (wife, mother, lover, whore, etc.) is the result of their dependence on the inferior role of women for thousands of years. The oppressor is threatened by any hint that women could be regarded equally or even prove superior to him. He responds frantically, fearing the loss of his strength-giving identity. If he is forced to consider the equality of the oppressed he must deal not only with the fact that he is the same as her, but also with his history of oppressing an equal.

There are men who do not appear to be the vicious oppressors of women. Yet any man who is not working consciously to change the unequal relationship of men and women is opposing the interests of women. He is just as guilty as the more blatantly violent man and is actually a great deal more insidious.

Analysis of the man's problem is necessary for women to develop good consciousness, but action is another problem. One thing is certain: Proximity to the male cannot effect cure. The disease is social and must be dealt with politically. We cannot "work out" the problem with a man or men, nor can we transfer the problem to an all female situation. That would mean simply finding comfort there and then returning to our cages. Homosexuality is again no more than a personal "solution."



We should deal with the problem in material terms, not in fantasy terms. Our attitude should lead us to separation from men who are not consciously working for female liberation, not to sectarianism in an all female movement; isolation (desertion) of males, not hate invective; self-defense, not shaming and begging men to stop being brutes (they love being considered brutes). Hatred and resentment for men are not sufficient to give women lasting energy to fight. Yet they are probably inevitable results of increasing awareness of what men have done and do to us. Recognition of the SOCIAL nature of the oppression of females is our first step to consciousness. It might seem that such recognition would free individual men of the burden of guilt. But in fact it makes continued subjugation impossible for the woman. She will begin to fight back and the man will have to confront HIS problem.

Roxanne Dunbar and Lisa Leghorn  
July, 1969

*For it is not in giving life but in risking life that man is raised above the animal; that is why superiority has been accorded in humanity not to the sex that brings forth but to that which kills.*

*Simone de Beauvoir  
The Second Sex*

The division of labor...is based on the biological division of labor in the family and the separation of society into individual families opposed to one another....wife and children are the slaves of the husband. This latent slavery in the family, though still very crude, is the first property, but even at this early stage it corresponds perfectly to the definition of modern economists who call it the power of disposing of the labor-power of others.

Marx, *The German Ideology*

## BATTLE LINES

We have to recognize man as the enemy if we are to start freeing ourselves. It is men who run the government and the economy, businesses and families; they are responsible for our oppression directly and indirectly. No matter how oppressed they are by the system, they run it and make the decisions, and they reap many psychological and economic advantages from the power they wield. We get no such rewards and should never accept the paltry and pitiful gestures we receive as sops in place of real equality.

If it isn't pointed out to men the role they play as oppressor; if they aren't criticized and condemned for it they will never feel any need to change their behavior. They will just go on blaming their and our oppression on some distant uncontrollable political system which they're not responsible for.

The GI's in Vietnam might be oppressed in their own class, but if the Viet-Cong and North Vietnamese let that issue cloud their minds, felt pity, even considered it in battle, they would be sacrificing their own chances for liberation.

Just as white liberals bemoan their oppression by the system that oppresses the black man, too, all men complain that they are just as oppressed as women. This doesn't mitigate the oppression of the black man, nor does it make us any better off. The black man still knows that the white man is his enemy; the Viet Cong knows that the GI is his enemy, and we must take it for granted that most men are our enemies until they prove different.

Men that are the worst off, the ones who receive the least economic rewards and political power are perhaps the most brutal in their exploitation of women. That's the only psychological reward they can take advantage of; the rest are closed to them. But in realizing their oppression we can't excuse their brutality. It's the only form of power they have, and it won't be easily given up. It will have to be taken away from them by force, or non-cooperation and condemnation. Not until he stops oppressing others will he be able to see clearly his own economic and political powerlessness and start changing it.

We can't act out of fear of alienating men. Sooner



or later if we are effective, men will become hostile. We have to be prepared to accept this fact. Not only accept it but segregate ourselves from men in many situations, to allow ourselves freedom from their criticism, opinions and dominance, to develop our own sense of direction, priorities, goals, values, and self-confidence. As long as we are entangled in personal relationships and group situations with men we won't be able to clearly analyze our position and will have a vested interest in not making males too hostile. There are very few men who can squarely face their role in our oppression, admit their wrong and try constantly to change. In other words most men are incapable of having an egalitarian relationship with a woman; they can't even imagine what one would be like because their roles are too internalized and ingrained.

The rewards you gain in playing a role in relationships with men begin to disappear and in fact become an insult, as you become conscious of the degradation and oppression involved in maintaining the relationship. The relationship inevitably becomes worthless, because the price you have to pay is too great in terms of self-respect.

We can't be generous and unselfish any longer. History has proven it won't help our situation. We have to think of our own liberation first and not forget our goals, in favor of someone else. The roles that are assigned to us and that we are programmed for (not just the maternal role) are intended to make us think we should sacrifice ourselves and the fulfillment of our needs for men and children. Men also isolate us from each other and keep us in competition for their approval and attention. As women never had any effective power, the approval of other women doesn't mean much. Only when women's opinions have some value and their voices some effect will the approval of women mean something to other women and to men, too. To gain this feeling of self-worth women have to stop listening to men's appraisals of themselves and stop accepting the degrading so-called privileges offered to them in place of having real control over their own lives.

Betsy Warrior

July, 1969

## WOMEN'S MAGAZINES AND WOMANHOOD, 1969

Our ideas about ourselves and our identities as women are formed to a large extent by our environment. This is a truth of psychology, of "human nature." People need the approval of other human beings, in order to be confident within themselves of their own worth, and so they try whatever they believe will win them the approval of society. Moreover, people tend to become what they are told they are, even if it appears at first to contradict experience.

It is because we are *human*, and yet, being women, with crippled egos, uncertain and unconfident about ourselves, trained to be malleable and accept the word of authority rather than pushing our own opinion, we are perhaps victimized even more than men by definition from without.

A primary influence on women is the women's magazines, which regularly instruct women about themselves, what they are and what they should be. Every issue of every women's magazine has at least an article or two with explicit instructions on how to conquer selfishness and become a real woman. Selfishness seems to be a very great problem for women. It's selfishness that makes women feel trapped as housewives; selfishness that makes so many women frigid; selfishness, in short, that keeps her from her destiny and dignity as a true woman.

### Part I--Sex

*Cosmopolitan*, Helen Gurley Brown's magazine, speaks to free, self-confident, career-oriented women, who have a sense of themselves, who have a will to success. It is these women that it is channeling into femininity. In the world of *Cosmopolitan*, we fight for a glamorous job, because a career is *sexy*; we make something of ourselves, in general, because it will make us more attractive to men. Not necessarily to snag a man into marriage, but for sex and male attention. Ultimately men are the only important and interesting thing in the universe and all the really good things come to a girl through men. This runs through every article in the magazine.

In an article called "The Girl-Friend Game" (May, 1968), Jeannie Sakol says, "Girl friends are vital to



girls...Girl friends help each other get a man. They know a man is any girl's really best friend and that only a man can make a woman happy."

Be sexy, groovy, exciting, successful, always feminine, of course, always obviously man-loving, and a man will be attracted and invite you to his yacht, give you an exciting job, or marry you if that's what you want.

#### "HOW TO LOVE LIKE A REAL WOMAN"

In June, 1969, *Cosmopolitan* provided us with an incredible piece of vicious propaganda by Barbara Bross (the pseudonym of a "well-known American gynecologist"). It was entitled "How to Love Like a Real Woman."

Dr. Bross makes her position very clear. "Sexual abstinence in a normally constituted person is always pathogenic. It always causes sickness of one kind or another, either mental or physical...We have been given sex organs to use them. If we don't use them, they decay and cause irreparable damage to body and mind. This is blunt, firm, indisputable, and true. Anyone who tells you anything else is either ignorant or hypocritical."

*Playboy* magazine doesn't treat its readers with this kind of contempt. The *Playboy* Adviser (Nov., 67) says about sexual abstinence: "Abstinence, as such, is neither good nor bad for the health. What does affect the individual's well-being are the circumstances of, and the motivations for, the abstinence. Kinsey pointed out that men who are physically incapacitated, natively low in sex drive, sexually unawakened in their early years or separated from their usual sources of sexual stimulation can abstain indefinitely without appreciable harm. Even when these conditions do not prevail, if the motivation for abstinence is conscious and rational, no harm will be done."

The difference, apparently, is that *Playboy* is speaking to men, who are human beings first and sexual creatures second. It is conceivable that a man might have a conscious and rational reason for abstinence. *Cosmopolitan* apparently considers women sexual creatures first who are sick unless they are legitimizing themselves through a sexual relation.

The thing that makes that statement so evil is the fact that most sexual relations that women get into

are oppressive, and when a woman is driven by the idea that celibacy is physically and mentally dangerous, it is almost assured that she will get involved in, and stay involved in, oppressive situations.

But perhaps, because of our female liberation viewpoint, we are over-suspicious. Maybe Dr. Bross envisioned at least the active, equal, dignified relationship that free, self-confident women demand. And maybe she classes sex with eating or sleeping: necessary, but not really a woman's means of actualizing herself.

#### We Learn Through Action

And in fact she says, "Don't lie still and let things happen to you. That is degrading. We learn through action. We feel in action. We cannot learn, or feel, or realize ourselves if we do not act." That sounds fine. But the very next sentence turns out to be, "And the primary form of action, for women, is in bed." "For a woman", she says, and clearly she means that it is not man's primary form of action.

She continues: "A man thinks in terms of combat. A sexual relation therefore shapes itself in his mind as a sequence of provocation, attack, surprise, conquest, and surrender. The woman must give him a chance to fight. This is a male ritual. And although fighting, as such, is wholly alien to the feminine psyche, she must give her man the chance of proving himself in such a fight. She must fight back. But she must fight with female weapons--with seduction and consolation, coquettishness and enchantment, grace and charm and passion, with every gesture of her body, with what she leaves unsaid, with her promises, what she reveals and what she hides, what she grants and what she denies." "Give her man the chance of proving himself," "fight with female weapons" (that is, unthreatening weapons, not weapons at all, but promises, invitations, teasing).

#### How to Kill a Quarrel Quickly

In a section headed "how to kill a quarrel quickly" she says: "If your man bawls at you and you know you are in the right, what should you do?" The answer? "You should take your clothes off. Sex is a woman's strongest weapon. It is her proper weapon. And most



men will be infinitely relieved if they don't have to go on with a row and can go to bed instead." I should think so.

She says later, "Women must give and give and give again because it is their one and only way to obtain happiness for *themselves*." "Their" she says; again this is something true only about women. Women's only way of obtaining happiness for themselves is by giving. Men obtain it by making a mark on the world, using their capacities, forging a unique identity. But women obtain happiness by GIVING. How convenient for men.

The final section in the Cosmo article is called "loving like a real woman." In it she says: "A woman's strength lies in her ability to give without taking. She gives men rest and strength and tranquillity because she gives them an antidote to the dog-eats-dog world in which they earn their living." Yes, I should think having someone around who gave without taking WOULD be restful. But that nasty dog-eat-dog world... HE'S one of the dogs, and SHE'S making it possible for him to go on being a dog.

Now she gets down to it, really pouring on the mythic womanhood. Significantly in this last section, she talks about "woman" not "women." This is the dream woman; it has nothing to do with real women, the conglomerate of individuals.

#### You Can Only Lose

"Woman is man's intermediary between himself and nature." She is not human, or at best only half-human, somewhere between nature and humanity. "He considers her as part of nature, though he will never say so, but that is what he *feels*. Her periods echo the rhythm of nature. Her ability to give birth makes her part of nature. She is the mother. She is the earth. She *senses* where he can only *think* or *act*. Woman *is*, man *does*.... Do not ruin your marriage, or your love affair, by trying to compete with your man on his own masculine terms. You can only lose. And by that I do not mean that you may lose an argument; I mean that you may lose your dignity, your stature, your strength as a woman."

What does she think you lose by taking off your clothes and using sex instead of logic when you're in

an argument and you're right? "The moment she starts to argue with him, fight with him, she becomes WEAK, not strong. The rules of the struggle, the rules of the argument, are male." Logic is male? Thought is male? Reality and truth are male? "To argue is a male activity. To fight is a male activity. I say to women: Don't become a man in skirts. Don't fight. Don't argue. You are the stronger sex because he feels he must constantly prove his superiority. Whereas you need not prove anything. It is enough that you are... that you are there...quiet...unshakable...always ready to give. That is your strength."

If a woman could do all that she would cease to exist. No one could be like that. Her instinctive will to live would come out as martyrdom.

The problem is that healthy women absorb this propaganda and it adds to their burden of guilt over being defective women, over the fact that their man, whom they perhaps love, is burdened with something less than what he deserves. Or they will accept a man who treats them badly since after all they have to recognize that, measured against this "real woman" standard (June, 1969, by the way, not eons ago, and in America, in *Cosmopolitan* magazine, not in some old world setting), they are bitches, selfish, unfeminine, competitive, denying their man his deserved respite from the dog-eat-dog world.

#### The Woman Doctor

The question arises, by the way: if Barbara Bross is a woman, and a well-known American gynecologist, she has hardly been lurking around the fire all day waiting for her man to come home so she could give give give, waiting to rip off her clothes if he gets snotty. You don't get through medical school by merely sensing, never thinking, acting, competing, fighting, or doing. She says "A woman asks as little of her man as she asks of her children. She devotes her entire life to a child, then sends it out into the world--into the arms of another woman; or, in the case of a daughter, into the arms of a man." If she is a well-known gynecologist, she has hardly been "devoting her whole life" to her family. And if the author is not a woman, why does he pretend to be by taking a feminine pseudonym? Because the phoniness of the advice would be too

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obvious if it came from someone with so obvious a vested interest?

If women reading this article have ideas of their own about themselves that conflict with this, they will be at least confused. Here is an authority, a well-known gynecologist asserting things with medical authority, served up by *Cosmopolitan* magazine, well known to be career oriented, a magazine that wants women to make something of themselves. If such ideas really went out with the dark ages, why do we keep hearing them from respected authorities?

### The Frigidity Spector

Masters and Johnson, in their book, *Human Sexual Response* proved conclusively that there are not two orgasms (an immature, masculine clitoral orgasm and a mature womanly vaginal orgasm) as Freud postulated in *Three Essays On The Theory of Human Sexuality*.

All orgasms take place in the clitoris, whether they are induced through direct stimulation of the clitoris, through indirect stimulation of the clitoris during conventional intercourse, or occur as a result of fantasy of mystical concentration.

"Frigid" women, that is, women who are unable to have "vaginal orgasms," are not suffering from a psychological block, but are responding in a perfectly predictable way to anatomical considerations. The clitoris simply does not get much stimulation during sexual intercourse.

The entire concept of frigidity should have been killed by the Masters and Johnson report. Women fail to achieve the vaginal orgasm because there is no such thing, and not because they are neurotic, unable to adjust sexually to their womanhood. And yet the propaganda from doctors, psychiatrists, and marriage counselors continues to terrorize women with the same threats, and the women's magazines continue to play them up.

### "THE POWER OF SEXUAL SURRENDER"

In April, 1969, *Pageant* magazine ran a book excerpt from a "popular" book by "a female doctor, Dr. Marie Robinson." It was called "The Power of Sexual Surrender." *Pageant* states in the introduction, "...[M]ore than

40% of American married women are either totally or partially frigid--and [Dr. Robinson says] that this frigidity destroys the possibility of happiness in marriage." Moreover, according to Dr. Robinson, "it also endangers the health and happiness of her husband and children."

These are strong threats. More is involved here than a fleeting physical gratification. Her whole marriage, and the health of her husband and children, depend on her making the necessary adjustment to escape frigidity.

Those doctors and marriage counselors who have realized that clitoral stimulation is necessary for a woman's orgasm have urged that the husband not seek only stimulation for himself, but to seek out the ways in which to give pleasure to and stimulate his wife and enable her to experience orgasm. Dr. Robinson deals with this: "A common myth exists that the husband is to blame for the frigidity problem. This is highly unlikely. In saying this, I am running counter to a vast body of published information that says any failure of a woman is due to the faulty technique of her husband. This is simply not true. While a husband, through tenderness and understanding, may help a woman face the nature of her problem, he cannot, through mechanical means, get her over it. Neither can any man other than her husband."

Now, having made it clear that the frigid woman has no hope of happiness in her marriage and will, in fact, ruin the health and happiness of her husband and children, and making it clear that the failing is entirely her fault and has nothing to do with anything her husband might be failing to do (such as stimulate her) Dr. Robinson proceeds to describe the "normal" woman who is able to experience orgasm.

### Essential Altruism

"This woman is very much at home in the world. She is very, very glad to be a woman, with all the duties, responsibilities and joys it entails.... She also gets profound delight in giving to those she loves. Psychiatrists call this characteristic the hallmark of the truly feminine character, 'essential feminine altruism.' When a woman does not have this altruism available to her, or when she denies that it is a



desirable trait, life's continuous small misfortunes leave her in a glowering rage, full of self-pity. Sexually, she almost always reaches a climax during the act of love....Lest you think that her altruism makes her a martyr, let me say no. In her quiet way she is self-centered. She has self-love, takes pride in and loves her body. She likes to be clean as a cat and neat as a pin...And once children are here she gets her supreme joy out of homemaking."

If a woman is not essentially altruistic, life is difficult for her only because such altruism is demanded of her. Men are not essentially altruistic and they get along in life better than women do, are even better able to cope with the world and its small misfortunes. The climax she reaches "in the act of love" is obviously a vaginal one; the act of love is the husband stimulating himself by contact of his penis against her vagina. She has self-love, but predictably this has nothing to do with her mind, or will, or character, or interests intellectual or spiritual. Her self-love is something between keeping herself clean so as to be acceptable to him ("clean as a cat and neat as a pin" makes me think of men's atavistic feelings about women as essentially dirty in their sexuality) and narcissism. In any case, self-love for a woman is love of her body. And she takes her supreme joy in homemaking. JOY. Her SUPREME joy. Again, a woman doctor telling other women to stay home.

Dr. Robinson then discusses the partially frigid woman, "who trembles on the verge of sexual maturity, but cannot quite step over the line." This probably strikes a familiar chord in a lot of women who are trembling on the verge of orgasms during vaginal intercourse, but can't quite step over the line because the indirect stimulation just isn't enough. Dr. Robinson continues, "In love she has all the normal responses except that she can't come to orgasm or at least does so quite rarely."

Then (in April 1969) the Freudian two-orgasm propaganda again: "In still another type of woman, the orgasm takes place on the woman's clitoris exclusively. She does not feel the orgasm in her vagina, which is really the center of sexuality in women. This clitoral woman is very definitely suffering from a form of frigidity

which is extremely widespread." I'll bet it's widespread.

#### Resentment Against the Husband

Dr. Robinson then goes into case histories. She finds resentment against the husband and the feeling in the wife that the husband was trying to impose his will on her and that it was necessary to struggle against it. She also finds a relationship between the frigid wife and her father. Either she had a good relationship and was a Daddy's girl, or she had a bad relationship and so rejected men.

Dr. Robinson then gives a case history of a "classical clitoridal woman." "Toni herself was a driving competitive woman who was very successful in the business world, having graduated from a leading woman's college....Sexually Toni took the lead, just as she did in social matters. (Please note that this is a reversal of the usual pattern in sexual love: it is usually the man who initiates sex.) Her orgasms were never deep or satisfying, because she had a real fear of vaginal feelings. This type of woman very early 'learns' that womanhood is dangerous, a slavish and humiliating role. Only men are powerful and secure; she identifies with them exclusively." It appears that "clitoridal" women are just those smart enough to know where their orgasm is. Apparently, however, Toni wasn't aggressive enough to demand direct stimulation from her husband. This is probably the reason her orgasms were "never deep or satisfying"--the orgasm resulting from direct stimulation is usually more intense.

"Now that we have seen the misery frigidity causes, you might ask, 'How does one change?'

"My answer is that, since the log jam called frigidity is held in place by two basically neurotic attitudes--a neurotic attitude toward men and a neurotic attitude toward real womanhood--these attitudes must be changed."

"Sometimes a person can do this by feeling his [sic] feelings. For example, a patient of mine kept complaining about her husband's sloppy habits; she was always picking up after him. As she talked and talked, it turned out that she wasn't angry, she was



enraged and furious. She felt he was sloppy not merely because he was but because deep down he wanted to humiliate her, enslave her, because he felt she had nothing to do but pick up after men. Men considered themselves superior, she went on. All they wanted from a woman was sex." As you search out these negative feelings, Dr. Robinson says, you will discover they are only feelings, not reality. "Usually they have been picked up unconsciously in childhood."

#### She is Ready to Surrender

"When the frigid woman has divested herself of the destructive fears and attitudes about men she previously held, a profound change begins to take place inside her... we say she is ready to surrender. This means, in the broadest sense, that she is prepared at long last to become a woman. .. And because they are feminine tasks, household work and keeping the children busy soon lose their irksome and irritating quality and become easy, even joyful. .. Soon, if a woman has truly pursued the goal of self-surrender with her husband's help, the ability to achieve orgasm must inevitably arrive."

Q.E.D.

To be continued next issue  
with PART II - MARRIAGE

Dana Densmore

it's very hard to adolesce  
one is given a number of years  
and told that within this time  
he must pubert all the way to maturity  
this enormous charge  
would not seem so unbearable  
utterly impossible  
were it not given  
when one has not yet learned  
how to child

jayne west

## COUNTRY WOMEN (excerpts from an autobiographical essay)

In the farming community where I grew up, the distinction between male and female was absolute. But the women had none of the "privileges" given wealthy women. However, men had many of the privileges reserved for men only. For instance, women were expected to work in the fields doing heavy labor when needed, but men were never expected to do domestic work or care for the children. The care of the children was in the hands of women only. Women cared for one another while pregnant and in labor and helped each other with the care of the babies and children. In that way children were raised "communally", but with women only sharing the labor.

In some country families, the women did dominate--perhaps more often than did the men. There was a division of labor based on sex, and totally separate spheres of responsibility. But since these poor country men had no power outside the patriarchal family, and there was no town government, there was no exteriorization of the patriarchal role. Many women ran farms, their husbands serving as sort of foremen. To have such independence, though, the woman had to "have a man." "Old maids" and widows were powerless and often tragic.

In general, women talked as loudly and as much as men in mixed company. Any joke about women was met with a more biting joke about men, or the reverse. But most activities were segregated. The women were not passive, nor were they expected to be "soft" and "maternal." They whipped their children, yelled at them, demanded that children entertain themselves. But the men were not abstract figures; they were constantly present, in and out, living in crowded quarters with the family.

The women basically considered the men as weaklings who must be kept in line to keep them from leaving, and from drinking. Generations of men moving off to the West leaving women in charge of farms and children made for very sturdy women, but also for meandering men. I know my mother feared that my "cowboy" father would one day walk out, or take to drinking. To the women, equality could only mean equal bondage. If they were to be tied to farm and work, the men should



be also. The men wanted the freedom to rove, but also they wanted to have a family and eventually land of their own. They could not have both, and the women policed their behavior.

By the time I was born (1938), many of these patterns were beginning to change, so that by the time I had left home (1956), the tenuous cultural patterns had been shattered. I heard much in my childhood about the terrifying years of the depression, when there were no shoes for my brother and sister, barely any food, and how lucky I was. But still we were always very poor. It was a poor community, and getting poorer. The city people were buying up the land for wheat and crop subsidies. It got harder and harder for a family like mine to find a farm to rent or sharecrop. We moved a half dozen times between the time I was born and when I started to school. There was always talk of going to California, mostly by my mother.

My mother wanted a better life. She had always lived in absolute poverty, with no mother and a drunken father. She blamed my father for our poverty, and he blamed his misfortune, and he railed against the Roosevelts, the Easterners, and the rich in general. Mostly, though, they fought with each other.

In the late '40's and early '50's, many of the dirt farmers went to work in the city at defense plants, and moved away. My mother wanted to do that, so she could have a refrigerator, stove, running water, a bathroom, closets, like all city people seemed to have even when they were very poor. My father refused to move to the city, but he did finally stop trying to make it farming, and took a job driving a gas truck, and other part time jobs.

Then it was in the early fifties that movies and television invaded the culture, introducing new (urban, northern) patterns. The country folk were mystified by the city people on the screen, and they were humiliated in their ignorance and roughness. The women were embarrassed by the soft, white ladies in low cut gowns with their jewels and high heeled shoes up against themselves--country women with their leathered, brown skin and muscles, and drab work clothes and heavy shoes. The men felt "more manly" toward the

soft-voiced, tender ladies on the screen than toward their own unsightly women.

The image of the male which Hollywood created was not very different from the country man, particularly the cowboy. The female image, however, was totally different from the country women's reality. They were to change completely--physically and psychically. It did not work. The sight of country women in rhinestones and platform heels and brief dresses over their muscular bodies was a pitiful one indeed. So the men left them (in fantasy) for Hollywood (the new West).

The women tried to create the glamour in their daughters, which they themselves could not attain. "Pretty as a movie star" was a common way of describing a girl who fit the image. The image was curly, blond hair, blue eyes, rosy complexion, and a soft round body. (I was tall, dark, thin, with very straight hair and big feet, but my mother tried; she took me to get permanents--electric.) Shirley Temple was the daughter all mothers wanted.

Poverty is a reflection of bad character, of evil, in America, where anyone can be rich--so they say. A smart country girl lies about her humble background, when she goes to the city--that is if she wants to catch a city man who will raise her status. So the poor country girl grows up either in ignorance destined to marry a poor farmer and live in relative poverty or move into the post-wartime economy of urban employment, or she will make it out into a higher class through marriage (as I did). In any case, her identity will remain highly confused. Ashamed of her class status, she probably will not in her lifetime discover her caste status as a woman, though she is fully aware that she is subservient to the men of her class, who are just as poor.

It took me many years to find out that I could never "make it" in this society, even if I excelled, because I was born female, not male.

Roxanne Dunbar



## WOMEN OF THE RULING CLASS

One tends to think that the women of the ruling class have more effective power than other women and that their situation is preferable to the other kinds of lives available to women. One tends to forget that they are women, that they belong to their husbands or fathers (owners) and that they are used by their owners in the same or equally degrading ways as other women. The knowledge of their owners' money and power corrupts them and fools them into thinking that this power is their own. They identify with these men rather than with other women and try to imitate their power by condescending to people without money. They have no sense of community with each other, as they continuously compete against each other. Hence, their image is despicable and they are often thought of as "uncle toms".

Yet these women have no more respected power than other women and less than most men. They are often revered or bowed to obsequiously as a result of their association with their owners. Yet this does not constitute any sort of personal authority. In street situations they are subject to the same degradation, obscenity and lack of respect as other women.

The women of the ruling class have less potential independence than women from other economic strata. They haven't rejected their position because they feel it offers more than the alternatives available to women. Hence they strive harder for acceptance in this role. They are weak and dependent as opposed to very poor women who often constitute the strength of their families. Equality means for them not equal bondage but equal "freedom" (travel and sex, although this physical "independence" is possible only by their owners' means). They are accustomed to a life of plenty and inactivity. They have no skills and couldn't possibly support themselves and their children without alimony. They could not adapt psychologically to a life stripped of the economic and political privileges they are used to and "need". They couldn't exist on welfare. Hence, they are tied to their owners by the strongest and most destructive bond possible, fear. As they experience no economic exploitation, they cannot harbor the illusion that if their economic compensations were greater they would be happy being women. They know where they stand. They are afraid of being alone although

they can't admit to themselves that theirs is the lonliest life as it stands. They compete with other women and are not treated equally or humanely by their owners. The combination of these fears renders them incapable of changing their position. Their situation is not only degrading and humiliating, but it leaves them stripped of all energy and inspiration. They have *no* hope of escape or "rising" out of their condition. They live in a continual depression, veiling their shame and despair with the clothes, social life and temporary "escapes" (alcohol, trips around the world, villas, etc.) of the "care-free". They don't have the privilege of private depression. They must maintain a contented, gracious and relaxed image for the public eye. This is a part of their function as the wives or daughters of the ruling class men.

These women are deprived of the pleasure of engaging in any stimulating or challenging activities. They are placed on a pedestal, draped and adorned so that their owners can more proudly show off their possessions. They're never *allowed* to lift a finger. Although they have a large number of socially acceptable (confining) activities open to them, they find no satisfaction in any of them. The pressures resulting from their social position deprive them of the only possibility for freedom from their depression-the freedom to exercise authority over their own lives. This can be established only by their active engagement in productive, creative activities. They are allowed to amuse themselves in any number of ways, but never to engage in useful and progressive activities. Poor women at least have self-respect resulting from their usefulness within their families. But women of the wealthy have only token responsibilities and functions. They are restricted socially and psychologically (as are all women-formerly women were restricted physically-the handicap of perpetual pregnancies) from participating in those activities that do something with life-that are considered to make life worth living.

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You-smug ugly rich man-you show your cherished power so easily, evoking fear with the glint of your eye and the snap of your fingers. You love the women-those women who have learned out of fear to submit to your whims and



desires. Those women who dress for you, chatter, laugh and cry for you. Your arbitrary authority is exerted over all heads by the flick of a crisp bill. But it is confirmed, magnified and exalted by the decadent degradation and subjugation of your women. YOU FEEL SO GOOD, you feel your power so deeply-YOU KNOW YOUR POWER SO DEEPLY as they live their lives for you. But this must be done with the utmost care, "suaveness", and "sophistication" by your women. They must never show a sign that they hate their lives-that they hate you-that they hate themselves. You scorn so heavily, so overtly those women who deign to express their doubts, to engage in activities that are anything but useless and for your benefit. Your women must laugh perpetually (hysterically), must never question, must always admire, must perform well (beautiful dolls) for your friends or partners and in bed (denying themselves any pleasure). Otherwise they know they will be tossed scornfully out of the apartments you have bought for them (where you meet them while your wife goes alone to cocktail parties). Or worse-if they are bound to you by law, they must also face public disapproval and comment.

This life that they thought would be their emancipation-this life which they so hate, but so fear to admit to themselves that they hate; if this life isn't good, where does a woman go?

Lisa Leghorn, October, 1969

...by complete possession and control woman would be abased to the rank of a thing; but man aspires to clothe in his own dignity whatever he conquers and possesses; ...How to make of the wife at once a servant and a companion is one of the problems he will seek to solve;

Simone de Beauvoir  
The Second Sex

## FEMALES AND WELFARE

There are 35 million poor people in this country. A THIRD OF THE POOR LIVE IN FAMILIES HEADED BY FEMALES. Many of these families are on welfare, and more should be getting some kind of welfare supplement added to their income. Many of us think that in the richest nation in the world there should be no poor people at all, and that the political and economic reasons for their existence must come to an end.

Why were the welfare mothers picked by radical organizers to disrupt the political system, with the economic breakdown on a local level, and the change in the whole political structure that their demands might bring?

Since five million of the poor are aged, it isn't likely that these older people would start an active fight against the system that kept them in poverty. Old people are more conservative and lack the energy and determination for a prolonged fight. But other families, a lot of them headed by males-- why don't they fight the system that made them poor? They could fight for an adequate income.

What are the special qualities welfare mothers possess, to make them the ones chosen to fight the establishment? The basic reason is mothers will fight for their children, to supply their needs, and they will struggle for as long as it takes for their children to grow up. They possess both the will and sustained determination to demand long and loud that the political structure allow their children enough to live on decently, and in doing so change the political structure.

The fact that most families on welfare are headed by females says just as much about the status of females in this country as it does about the political economy. Females in this country are too often dependent on someone else for their livelihood. Many lack an education good enough to allow them to support a family by themselves; or if they have an adequate education, they don't have the time or energy left after the duties of motherhood, household drudgery and menial tasks, to use it. Women have a status as dependent human beings in this country



that doesn't change, whether it's one man or the state that allows them money to live on.

Bringing welfare mothers together to fight for themselves has many positive aspects. It helps them to see their situation isn't caused by personal inadequacy, but the fault of a bad economic system. They find more can be achieved by speaking out and joining together to fight the welfare department than by remaining quiet and alone, or trying to hide the fact that they are on welfare. Of course, this only applies to the women who can be encouraged to join the welfare groups. There are many who are too defeated and afraid to try to help themselves, these women are even more in need of incentive and help.

The females in the group can become more politically aware of how their lives are run by city hall and demystify the local bureaucracy for themselves. By alleviating some of their more pressing material needs it might give them and their children more energy and hope to tackle some of the many problems they have as females and human beings.

But the great majority of welfare mothers do not realize what long range effects their actions will have on the system. They're being used as political fodder by men who want the system changed for themselves, and any benefits the mothers receive in the process are purely coincidental or material.

The welfare mothers run the risk of becoming as competitive, aggressive and power-hungry as the males who oppress them. This is because their groups are being patterned after the structure of male organizations, by male organizers, establishing a context of leaders and followers, encouraging competition for recognition and power between the women of the groups.

Though the mothers may change their material and political position, they won't be free until they identify their oppression as being inherent in the role they play as females, and abolish that role. Without consciousness of their inferior status as women they will remain the victims of society and merely tools of the people who wish to use their dissatisfaction to break the system.

Whether the money a mother receives is doled out by a husband or a paternalistic welfare department makes little difference. Both are degrading, and

many women prefer welfare to a husband. It is her position as a dependent female in relationships to males that is the root of her problem.

For instance, if an active welfare mother gets married, her husband doesn't let her continue her work in the group. It is time-consuming and he wants all of her time spent on him, being his house slave. So her experience that could be very valuable to other members of the group is wasted, and her relative independence is ended.

It is common practice for the male directors and superintendents of welfare to use the female clerks and secretaries as flunkies to transmit their refusals of help and threats to the welfare mothers, while they remain protected behind locked doors. Although most of the social workers are female, men have a monopoly on the positions of power in the welfare system. The social workers carry out their decisions and receive the scorn and abuse of the mothers. This confuses the mothers as to who the real enemy is. The women who work in the welfare department are poorly paid and overworked, not much better off than the welfare mothers, but they are set one against the other. Until they can see each other as sisters in oppression and start liberating themselves as females, they might succeed in changing the system, but others (men) will benefit by their success. Though the mothers will be the ones to bear the brunt of reaction and risk what little they have.

Betsy Warrior

*She is naturally tempted by this relatively easy way, the more so because occupations open to women are often disagreeable and poorly paid; marriage, in a word, is a more advantageous career than many others.*

*Simone de Beauvoir  
The Second Sex*



## "SEXUAL LIBERATION": MORE OF THE SAME THING

*Female Liberation.....The Liberation of women.... Women controlling their own bodies....* Somehow these assertions are often interpreted to mean "sexual liberation," or the "freedom" to "make it" with anyone, anytime. Woman must want to be more "herself," the logic goes, and since woman is a "sexual" being she must be wanting more "sexual" freedom. To me, simply more of the same thing has nothing to do with revolutionary change. How much does the "sexual freedom" movement have to do with the liberation of females? It seems much more to indicate the freedom for all, i.e. men to have equal access to sex, i.e. women. A variation on the theme is the new "gay liberation" movement of male homosexuals which denies the sex roles, but proclaims sexuality as basic to revolution.

The confidence that sexuality is the source of human liberation must be questioned. Sexual behavior is historically so tied up with the suppression and control of females by males, that it is difficult to comprehend such a simple solution. Masculine sexuality has had to do with power, and until power relations are changed, no correction of the symptoms is going to do much more than make the rich richer and the poor poorer, i.e. allow men to oppress women more openly and freely.

Perhaps sex, as we conceive of it as "fucking" (the full meaning) is doomed to die as property and power relations are changed. For reproduction, we already have artificial insemination; with community care of children no woman will be responsible for the children she produces, but all will be responsible for all children. As for affection, we have quite enjoyable universal habits which include verbal and physical contact, which do not lead to genital intercourse e.g. female relationships, adult and child, childhood relationships. Now when men conclude from such an idea that they will no longer be "needed," that women will kill off all the men, and breed babies in test tubes, they are only expressing the decadent psychology of the oppressor: they would rather die than give up their power, and they will die fighting for their interests. Their very fear of the loss of "sexuality" shows what power lies there for them. Their anticipation of being killed off frightens one, for it seems to indicate that such would be *their* solution--kill

off all the women.

With all the talk of sexual liberation, one rarely hears talk of the liberation from sexuality, which many women privately voice. Such a sentiment reveals, so men say, "frigidity," "coldness," Brave New World surrealism. Yet for most women, right now, sex means brutalization, rape, submission, someone having power over them, another baby to care for and support. Except for paid prostitutes and women with independent incomes, most women are dependent on a man for support, or they are subjected to brutalization if they (having no male "protector") are in the position of caring for themselves.

"Sexual liberation" for women is about as liberating as the free drug use, demanded by white radicals, would be to urban ghetto blacks, who are oppressed and, in fact, destroyed by the "freedom" to take drugs. Those demanding the freedoms of sex and drugs are mostly young, white men, and in this they are supported by the system (See *Life* on Woodstock and *Look's* article by J.D. Rockefeller III encouraging the "youth culture." --September, 1969).

The most insidious device of all for brainwashing females is the contemporary demand for people to "let go of their defenses," to "relax," "stop being uptight," to "groove." All of middle America (between the powerful and the dammed) is involved in encounter, T-group, and individual therapy in an effort to end the "games people play." A high percentage of these people are women. It is like encouraging someone to dive in the water for the first time. Teaching someone to swim by encouraging her to jump in the water is one thing; but the fact is that the pool is dry. People do not have defenses for nothing, and until new protections and power relations can be established, it is cruel to lead people to throw off the few protective defenses they have. It might even be that the impulse toward those defenses is more correct than the proclaimed "liberation" from them.

To the high and mighty white male, the "oversensitive," "hostile" behavior of females (and blacks) may seem trite, petty and unnecessary. But, on the contrary, the free and easy (*Easy Rider*) style of the "cool", young, white male is a privilege fully enjoyed only by his own kind, i.e. other white males.



Black people have created a movement and subculture which reinforces their extremely useful defenses against self-destruction and annihilation. Gradually new and more effective defenses have been developed to replace those which are self-destructive. No responsible black leader would tell black people to throw off their old defenses without providing new ones that will work better.

However, we white women have really been sold a line. Urban West coast and Northeast women have been particularly sold the line. The new demand by men in those areas is for women to be "groovy," "free" chicks. Women have responded, perhaps in order to "get along," and catch an elite male. Yet many women, young girls in particular, really believe that they are free and groovy and liberated, not that they are simply toeing the latest line men require to keep "loving" and supporting women.

It is time that this newest self-strengthening myth that men have created to further exploit females and keep us in our place be smashed.

One aspect of the myth is the idea that females must be educated to understand that sex is not "bad" or "dirty." They must understand that sex can be beautiful, fullfilling, and extremely pleasurable. This radical demand is now generally accepted in liberal circles, so that only right-wing organizations are now opposing the introduction of "sex education" courses in public schools. All the women's popular magazines as well as news weeklies are filled with radical analyses of sexuality. Great pressure is being put on women to be both independent (what modern man wants a clinging vine?) and a sex kitten at the same time. (Muhammed's dream of paradise may be realized in Brave New America--In the Muslim faith, females do not go to heaven; however, women are available there, and the essence of paradise is that men have free, full access to the female body.)

Why do females continually resist this much advertised liberation? Why is the advertising still necessary some fifty years after the propaganda for women to enjoy sex as much as men began? Why do females and males still think "sex is dirty?" Why is it that male homosexuality has increased and even been

openly demanded by radicals as a right? Why have "sex crimes" (crimes against females by males) increased? Perhaps it is because sex really is dirty. Men have contempt for women when women are physically weak and empty-headed. Yet they want just such a woman for sexual relations. I call that dirty. The man has to feel a kind of dizzying, sick sense of power, surely accompanied by a sense that he has dirtied himself; he has been intimate with what he considers an inferior being. The woman feels, quite accurately, defiled and humiliated. Those feelings can be mitigated by the compensatory device of romantic garblings of mutual appreciation, but the sense of dirtiness then is only repressed, not erased. Now and then you find a man who likes to have a "wildcat" for a woman. Such men are nearly always lower class bred. Yet, even they cannot escape the sense of sex being "bad" because the woman is *in fact* in an inferior position, however much a "wildcat." Such women, traditionally from the lower class, but now from the middle class as well, (hippie girls) have tragic and often short lives as a rule. Lacking access to a high-class marriage and rejecting the definitions that put women on the pedestal, they end up at the very bottom--as prostitutes, bar "flies", entertainers (nearly always sex-exploited, however talented they may be). Can one deny that sex in such a context is bad and dirty?

Maybe the new "sex education" is resisted because it is a lie. It does not speak to the oppression of females, but rather to the extension of male privilege.

Another aspect of the myth is that people are disgusted by pornography because they are "hung-up" about sex. After all the female body is a beautiful sight--nothing to be ashamed of. Do those who have made a cult of Lenny Bruce think that pornography is good and liberating? Do they really think people are "repressed" for not "appreciating" Henry Miller and Norman Mailer as well as lesser porn-stars? It might be that people are reacting against what is *behind* pornography, and are not just hung-up. Actually as the barriers to men's sexual fantasies have been broken down, women have only been more exploited and oppressed. (What if the lynching of blacks in the South had been legitimized by allowing it to happen more freely, even trying to persuade the blacks themselves that such



liberalism had something to do with their liberation? The logic is that the more you satisfy the demands of the oppressor the happier everyone will be. Of course, to legitimize the teasing, torture, and killing of blacks is more than liberals can accept. The fact they can tolerate similar treatment of females only shows how thoroughly accepted is the oppression and suppression of females; that people who demand the right to freely and legally propagate the exploitation of females can be called "radicals.")

What is behind pornography? Pornography rests on the accurate assumption that sexual "pleasure" is equal to power and dominance for the man. It expresses a masculine ideology of male power over females, and it cuts across class lines (Do black men write and read pornography? Probably they do to the extent that females do, which is very little. Yet masculine ideology has had its response among black males, and for many black males, power to dominate women is their reason for struggling for "liberation."). Often in pornography females are shown in the role as dominator. This is the other side of the ideology. Dominance is the rule. Either the male dominates, or the female dominates. Both concepts are part of the masculine ideology of power.

When I see pornography, whether "artistic" or "cheap" I feel utterly disgusted. When I hear of court battles to "liberate" me from such feelings, I feel enraged. My mind, understanding power relations better all the time, takes short cuts now. When I see *Playboy*, *Cavalier*, *Evergreen* and *Berkeley Barb* on a newstand or in the home of some cool radical, I immediately see corpses laid out for the photographer. Embalmed corpses. And I see the editors of those magazines as well as those who enjoy viewing the corpses as necrophiliacs. The "collector" and the necrophiliac are not a few far gone madmen. Most men are socialized to be necrophiliacs and collectors. Being also "deomocratic socialists" these editors (Ralph Ginzburg, *Avant Garde*; Hugh Hefner, *Playboy*; Maurice Girodius, general pimp pornographer; Marvin Garson, New Left pornographer, *Berkeley Barb*) would reason: If most men feel this way, then it must be good. If not good, it will certainly be profitable. But these men are not just crude capitalists. They are decadents. They love their work. They are dedicated.

Sex still means power. Women find this hard to believe, because to women it means oppression and at best, maintenance (being kept) and a little affection. But because the new myth of sexual liberation is so prevailing, sex itself has become a defense for many young women. In the past, though the principle commodity a female had to bargain with was sex, she had to tread very carefully. In America, where male democracy has given men of all classes the right to exploit and oppress all females, sex has far more market value. Marriage and prostitution are not the only jobs available. One way young girls have found to maintain themselves is to serve many masters, being then the servants of none. The cultural renaissance of the past few years has provided this opening. Young male musicians, young male political activists, and artists require "free chicks." So "free chicks" have emerged. These men need certain conditions in order to function creatively. Because they are public figures, and such a life is a strain, they require private moments, but those moments are unpredictable. Therefore they need a reserve of females they can call upon. Sometimes, if they are lucky, they find one female who is always available and even loves them. But generally the females themselves resist being "trapped." They responded to such men to begin with precisely because they did not want marriage, family ties; soon they become whores. What the hip young man requires is to have his ego boosted, but also to have good, valid criticism given in private by someone who has no power over him and who is not a competitor for power. But at some point such a young man reaches a saturation level. The very number of females he has related to begins to oppress him, drains his "vitality," and he forgets their names, even faces. He then begins to search for "the one."

These "free" girls are called "groupies" by the men who exploit them. The Rolling Stones put them down in song (Who Wants Yesterday's Papers?); journalists write lurid stories about them. The groupie is, they say, the "liberated woman." The only way a groupie can transcend the definition is to land a male in a permanent relationship, which most can't get. As long as they are living alone and relating to super-elite, super-arrogant males, they are groupies.



What do these girls want? What are they after? Actually most (at least in the beginning) want to learn, want to be independent, want to be revolutionaries. No matter what they learn they are still groupies unless they win the favor of a single man; then they are so-and-so's woman. The cleverest and most glamorous of them usually give in and take a single man, usually a top star or big leader. These males express utter contempt for the single women who are relating to them. Recently, in my presence, a prominent New Left leader, Tom Hayden, characterized a particular female who is in the small, activist group he organized in Berkeley, as "just a groupie." The girl in question happens to be a dedicated revolutionary. But she lives alone, and she does not have or want a permanent relationship with a man (at least not now). She has, of course, had to "sleep around" with male leaders in order to learn. A young man, relating to a leader, is considered a disciple, "a real revolutionary when he gets his head together." Females who try to have this same relationship with male leaders are put down as groupies. In fact, those male disciples are often relating to leaders in order to gain vicarious power. Usually, the females desire no power from the relationship, only knowledge. However, they rarely are able to learn because most of the male leaders are not generous with their knowledge. The groupie ends up teaching the man more than he teaches her.

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These are only a few examples of the myth of sexual liberation in action. Sexual relations in this society are not "degraded" because it is a commodity, or because technology has "dehumanized" such relations. Traditional as well as contemporary sexual relations are based on power of male over female. Pleasure is derived from that power. The power motive is laid bare in this period of decadence, but it is not new. So far no social scientist has questioned the exploitation of females by males. All assumptions about the relationship of male and female are myths which rationalize that exploitation. These myths must be smashed. Sexuality, as we know it, must be questioned. Yes, there is repression and suppression in this society, but let us analyze and treat the whole problem, and not just the symptoms. Let us openly admit that we

have all been brainwashed so that what is called "pleasure" is not really, and is actually often oppressive and humiliating. Why should we fear finding out the truth? It takes two to oppress, and unless we stop the mechanism of our oppression by exposing the whole truth and acting upon it, oppression will grind on with ourselves as willing victims.

Roxanne Dunbar  
October, 1969

In his wholesale and retail stores, Marshall Field employed no fewer than ten thousand men, women and children. He compelled them to work for wages which, in a large number of cases, were inadequate even for a bare subsistence. 95% received \$12 a week or less. The female sewing-machine operators who bent over their tasks all day long, making the clothes sold in Field stores, were paid the miserable wages of \$6.75 a week. Makers of socks and stockings were paid \$.57 to \$4.75 a week. The working hours were fifty-nine a week. All of Field's wage workers were paid by the hour; should they fall sick, or work become slack, their pay was proportionately reduced. For instance the report of the U. S. Industrial Commission of 1900 reported that after giving the low wages paid to women in different cities, it states: "It is manifest from the figures given that the amount of earnings in many cases is less than the actual cost of the necessities of life. The existence of such a state of affairs must inevitably lead in many cases to the adoption of a life of immorality and, in fact, there is no doubt that the low rate of wages paid to women is one of the most frequent causes of prostitution. The fact that the great mass of working women maintain their virtue in spite of low wages and dangerous environment is highly creditable to them." (from *History of the Great American Fortunes* by Gustavus Myers)



# DAUGHTER'S SONG

Blue and yellow  
grape or lemon  
I choose yellow.

Softly, my cat like a little girl  
is sleeping; ice cream for breakfast  
before school; I'll drive her  
So not to be late.

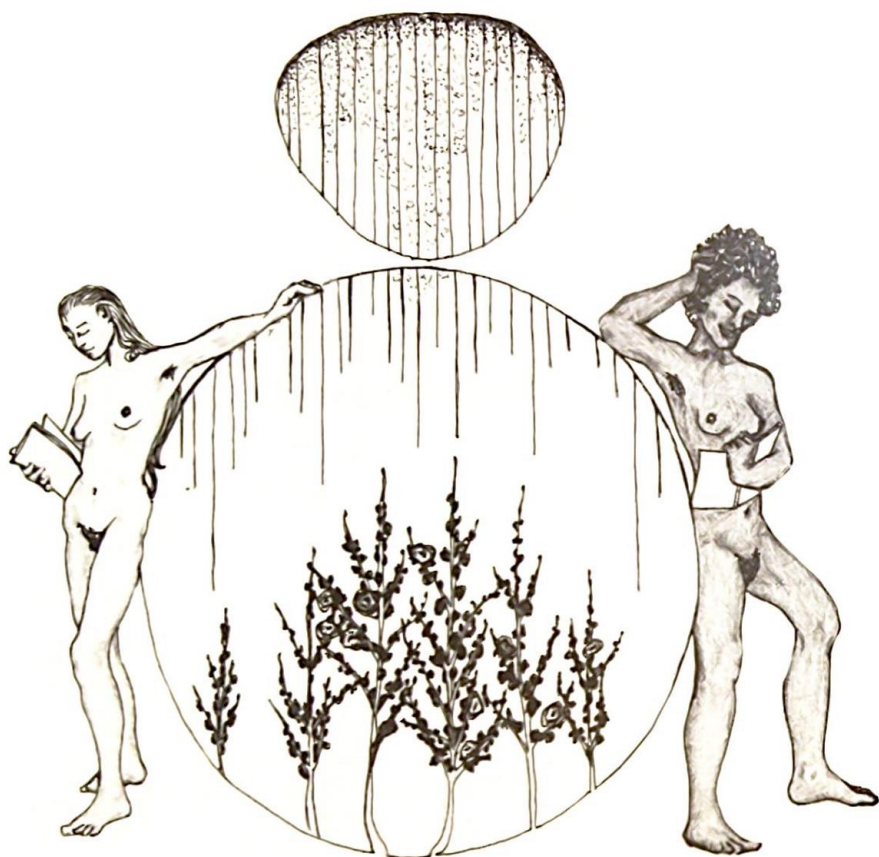
Haven't you a needle? See her skirt is torn  
My baby can't play outside  
When her new dress is dirty.

All the time I have to take such care  
She eats her turnips, stays in the yard  
And never touches my blocks; she is a good girl  
And I let her bake gingersnaps.

Green and red  
Your book or my sash  
I choose yellow.

Hilary Langhorst, 1969





*Indra Dean Allen*  
*September 1969*



eve ate  
from the tree of knowledge of good and evil  
not only that  
but she bade adam do too  
and by so doing  
she made god so angry  
that he expelled adam and her  
and all of us  
from the garden  
forever  
god's sentence that decree also implied  
or actually had written in fine print  
that man's sentence should not be so harsh  
that the harshness should be mitigated  
that he should be compensated  
by having an eternal slave in the form of woman  
as he was only an accessory after the fact  
in the search for knowledge

jayne west

## CHIVALRY--THE IRON HAND IN THE VELVET GLOVE

In less civilized ages and societies, if a woman got too uppity she was beaten up, or not thrown a piece of meat from the animal the man had killed, or she was raped. Here and now, men are usually more subtle, particularly in public with women over whom they have no legal rights.

Instead of it being necessary to beat her up to indicate his physical superiority, he finds he can make his point at least to his own satisfaction by opening a door for her, thus subtly indicating his superior strength and by implication her weakness and physical dependency. (This has the added advantage of tending to keep her weak in fact, due to lack of exercise.)

Instead of it being necessary for him to withhold food from her to indicate her economic dependency, he insists on buying her drinks. Naturally, he always buys the tickets and picks up the check on "dates" and is offended if she attempts to share expenses or pay for anything, but this technique is used not only in a "date" situation but in a situation that should be asexual, such as professional colleagues stopping together for cocktails after work.

Instead of having to rape her to remind her that just by being female she is sexual material for him, he makes flattering flirtatious personal remarks, calls her "kitten" or speaks appreciatively of the legs revealed by her short skirts.

Flirtation is subtle, yet devastatingly effective in slamming a woman back into her role as desirable sexual object. The gestures pose as flattering, but they simultaneously say that she is defined once again not as an autonomous individual person, but as a creature who exists relative to men, which means for men.

He finds her sexually attractive and this fact relates her to him. No longer does she exist on her own individual merits. He is offering her woman's traditional method of legitimating her existence--gallant him--and it implies he may never have seen her anywhere but her traditional place.

Men often accuse women of desiring equality but still demanding chivalry. But the reaction to a



rejection of a chivalrous gesture will usually reveal the gesture as a power play, important to the ego of the chevalier. He may whimper or squawk or speak in heavily patronizing tones behind which lie a barely veiled threat (threat of what? physical violence? rejection?--a woman is never sure, and rarely wishes to risk finding out). "Now you're going too far," he may say. "You're being ridiculous, oversensitive." Or he may allege that you've hurt his feelings. He only wanted to show you he liked you and found you attractive. Finally he might say (as I have been told--honest): "What *right* do you have to deny me something that gives me such pleasure? It's very un-Christian of you. Or don't you feel any obligation to be *nice* to people?"

Obviously more is involved here than meets the eye. A woman often senses this and feels a helpless humiliation under the gallantries, at the very least a slight feeling of discomfort. She usually interprets it simply as lack of grace in herself and thus turns the humiliation inward.

She feels put down, but knows she should be flattered and comfortable about the gesture. This is another example of the evil psychology of male supremacy where the woman is supposed to welcome, feel flattered by her own degradation, and if she finds herself instead feeling uncomfortable or humiliated she feels guilty and unwomanly, which is to say, a failure at being womanly.

All the gestures of chivalry make the woman passive, which is degrading. The only thing that can enable her to accept the gestures with honor is to become active, to hold a door for *him* in response, to buy him a drink next time or at least do something equivalent in return. But even if she attempts to even it up by some gesture of her own it's made into a joke because in this society these are things a man does for a woman and for the woman to reverse the roles will be interpreted as clowning (if it weren't a joke it would be insulting to be put in the woman's role).

The woman might well find, in fact, that the personal compliment, even when presented lightly or teasingly, is an invasion of her privacy. He has reduced her, without her permission, to the status of object.

If he finds her attractive, he ought properly to keep this to himself unless she has indicated that she is willing to relate to him on a sexual level. She is a person first, a human being, and her sexual aspect is secondary to this, to be brought out only when she considers it appropriate. The idea that any female is a legitimate object of sexual desire to a healthy male makes her female first, human being second.

The reverse holds also: it is degrading for a man to have someone relate to him sexually merely because he is male. What the girl in this case ("girl" is appropriate, because a "woman" is rarely so uncouth) sees in him, then, is just a sex organ, something every man has. He, therefore, knows that any man might be courted just as eagerly (or, for that matter, a mechanical substitute might actually suffice). The man feels that his talents, mind and character are going unappreciated--a blow to his ego. He feels used and angry, particularly if the attention is public.

Fortunately, this embarrassment is visited on men very rarely (although perhaps if it happened more often men would learn something about their own behavior). Most women, if they have such feelings, keep them to themselves. Only to a nymphomaniac is any man a legitimate object of sexual desire.

Men who are willing to accept women as colleagues (provided the woman demonstrates her equality by being superior) will often still cling to the economic privilege of buying her drinks much more grimly than can be explained by his desire to be courteous. Such a desire could explain his making sure that she really meant it; that she really would "rather do it herself." But it would not explain his insisting on it after being told the practice is humiliating to her, that she does not enjoy always being passive or the implication that she can't afford to buy her own (or perhaps that she might not have the intelligence to find her way to the bar or the aggressiveness to order the drinks, or that she might, who knows, even be physically assaulted on the way!).

His insistence, after he has been firmly refused, with explanations at great length, means he is getting a very significant benefit from it. It's not a financial reward, since on the contrary, he is paying for the privilege. The reward is psychological, a feeling of superiority.



He enjoys the implication, however subtle, that she doesn't have the intelligence and resourcefulness and courage to go order the drinks herself; or if she did have enough of the requisite male qualities to pull it off, the strain (the unnaturalness) would make it an unpleasant experience; or if she did have enough of the requisite male qualities to accomplish the task easily, he is gallant enough to spare her from the embarrassment of revealing these unfeminine attributes.

Even more rewarding is the implication of his doing the actual buying. Spending money is a way of expressing power. That he has money to spend on such things says something about himself, his status in the world, and his ability in a "to each, in dollars, according to his ability" society. In other words, he earns enough to buy drinks for others; you probably do not. The implications about your respective abilities, intelligence, and status are obvious.

It is a maxim that you never get something for nothing. When a man does another a favor a feeling of anxiety is set up until the debt is paid off. Of course, if the favor is obviously one that will be paid off sooner or later, or something which might just as easily have been the other way around, the anxiety is negligible.

But if one man is put in the position of having to accept favors and incur debts he knows he can never repay, the anxiety is great; he begins to hate himself and resents the other man for putting him in this position. "Paying your own way" is very important to self-respect, to pride.

The debtor is no longer psychologically free. Even if the favor-giver has no wish to be repaid, the recipient feels he owes him something, he *feels* indebted. This keeps him psychologically in a relationship of inferior to superior to the dispenser of the favors: they are no longer equals. The recipient resents the dispenser for destroying the formerly equal relationship.

There is also the rule, "He who pays the piper calls the tune." The man who is buying, therefore, becomes piper-payer and it becomes to a slight extent "his party." This will not be resented by men who realize that they will have their turn to enjoy the feelings of magnanimity and power. In a case, however, where

the piper-payer is *always* the dispenser, the recipient will feel more than a slight pressure to let him call the tune. One is not rude to one's *host*.

We are all concerned about "being bought," about setting up generalized obligations, the means of repayment of which we don't know in advance. In the case of women, they are "bought" by the instances of this practice and they don't know what's expected of them in return, a very uncomfortable situation.

"Just your charming company," the man might say, but *his* company is charming too; theoretically they are enjoying each other's company and, in fact, enjoyment of his company is the reason she is with him unless she is a prostitute or dance hall girl.

For him to pay for her, which is an indirect way of paying her, for her charming company, she must give him something in return, something he isn't also giving her. Maybe the key *does* lie in "charming company," perhaps the requirement is that she be charming in a way he is not. Perhaps what is required is that she play up to him particularly; let him have his way in making plans; let him dominate conversation; encourage him to talk about his projects, listening attentively and admiringly, not boring him with her projects or expressing contradictory opinions or better ideas. This is certainly generally recognized as the means for women to be charming, but it is not the way equals behave toward each other or the way work colleagues usually interact.

And suppose the woman doesn't understand that this "charm" really is adequate repayment (sometimes it obviously isn't, as when a man expects sexual privileges as a return on his financial investment). Or suppose she has too strong a sense of self, or just too much self-respect to be all that charming. She is then left with the uncomfortable feeling that she owes something she can't repay.

She sees to it that she is good company to the man, but he is also good company to her, for she doesn't waste her time with men who aren't. She entertains him, provides companionship, perhaps even affection or love or sex, but she feels that *she* is getting entertainment, companionship, affection, love, sexual pleasure as well. And she certainly hopes it's reciprocal in his mind, too, that *he* doesn't feel that he's buying something



She is not providing services for payment, but pursuing a relationship for mutual enjoyment. If she takes this attitude and he still always picks up the check, she is in the position of the perpetual recipient and the equality of the relationship is destroyed even without her going out of her way to be "charming." Then, even if she does not give him special considerations and favors beyond her natural inclinations, she must feel the discomfort of owing him something. He is "one-up."

Chivalry, then, makes equals unequal. Things work a little differently in cases where there was never any question of equality, in situations of rigid male supremacy, such as (to pick an extreme but by no means isolated example) lower class dating situations (lower class men, being relatively powerless in society, get practically all their status from their sex and the caste system that makes them the superiors and rulers of women ). In such cases it is common to find that women do enjoy chivalry and even prod or nag their dates or husbands be "gentlemen." In this case they know they aren't equal. They are never treated by men with deference or respect, as people. So this sort of attention is a significant measure of whether they are valued and respected, whether they are special. The less respect a woman gets as a person, the more she values the gestures of "respect" she can command as a woman.

These are not women who are demanding equality. For one thing, they don't think they are equal. They see "equality" as giving up these privileges (the privilege of being protected and paid for, the privilege of not being expected to understand difficult things, intellectual or mechanical). The compensatory privilege of competing with men and setting out to make a mark on the world is not a privilege if they are afraid they would fail and be ridiculed. If she is able to be successful as a woman, she feels she would be foolish to risk failure as a man.

As the climate of the country changes, however, as sexism is exposed for what it is and as more and more women become committed to their liberation, these "unequal" women will change, too. Their values and their attitudes will gradually change. They will come to

identify with women and feel good when a woman matches or surpasses men in fields of competence men have claimed as their own. She will feel good when she sees strengths in herself where the male culture contemptuously assigns her weakness. She will gradually learn to explore these strengths and be proud of them. She will gradually see through much of the mythology that is holding her in her place. And when the excitement of all this takes hold of her she will forget all about chivalry.

Men's behavior toward women in social situations is their public expression of their status in the caste structure. In Latin America, men will sit and talk for hours on end, completely ignoring their women that sit patiently by their sides. It is a proof of their manliness that the women love them so much they are willing to spend the day in utter boredom because their men want them at their sides as decorative adjuncts (seen and not heard). He is showing her off, not just her looks but her subservience. This is important; this gives the man status. It may be as important as the domestic and sexual service she provides him. Chivalry is another kind of social expression of the caste system. It is very important to certain men. But it is not the way equals treat each other.

What should be substituted for chivalry? men often ask. Should I slam the door back in her face rather than holding it? I would ask him, has he ever slammed a door back in a man's face? Of course not. He holds the door until the next man walking through can reach it, then walks on. Men and women should treat each other the same way men treat men and women treat women. Somehow such things are never an issue in those situations; the natural, rational procedure emerges automatically.

So, we will open our own doors, even if we have to build up a little strength before we can always do it easily. We will buy our own drinks if we are economically independent (which naturally we will be). And we will relate sexually only to those with whom we feel it is appropriate and only *when* we choose to.

And to the men who are so hurt, indignant, and ominous we will toss our heads and say, "I'm no 'kitten'; I'm me, so don't treat me like a pet. And don't waste your tears on the passing of chivalry, because there are much worse things in store for you."



And we can chuckle, because these men (after enjoying a drink or two, a little shop talk and a little flirtation) are looking forward smugly to the lovely hot dinner they know will be waiting for them at home.

Dana Densmore  
September, 1969



".....For goodness sake, teach your child self-defense. Teach her how to use the elbows to jab, how to kick shins, pull hair, slap faces, and to show some spirit.

I have watched one fine girl on our street defend herself for years. Her parents work, so she is alone; she can't go home to Mama. When boys pulled her pigtails, she kicked their shins, chased those who hit her with snow-balls, fought her own battles, but she fought! Today, she is tall, stately, strong but, above all, she is respected.

Get a book on self-defense from the library, and study it and teach your child how to defend herself. Give her backbone, instead of weak wish bone, to fight her battles in life."

"Distant Drum" (From "Confidential Chat"  
in the *Boston Globe*)

## CONDITIONING

In the adult world, no doubt, brute force plays no great part in normal times; but nevertheless it haunts that world; many kinds of masculine behavior spring from a root of possible violence: on every street corner squabbles threaten; usually they flicker out; but for a man to feel in his fists his will to self-affirmation is enough to reassure him of his sovereignty. Against any insult, any attempt to reduce him to the status of object, the male has recourse to his fists, to exposure of himself to blows: he does not let himself be transcended by others, he is himself at the heart of his subjectivity. Violence is the authentic proof of each one's loyalty to himself, to his passions, to his own will; radically to deny this will is to deny oneself any objective truth, it is to wall oneself up in an abstract subjectivity; anger or revolt that does not get into the muscles remains a figment of the imagination. It is a profound frustration not to be able to register one's feelings upon the face of the world.

Simone de Beauvoir  
*The Second Sex*

"When a child is called clumsy, he may at first retort with, "No, I am not clumsy." But, more often than not, he believes his parents, and he comes to think of himself as a clumsy person. When he happens to stumble or to fall, he may say aloud to himself, "You are so clumsy." He may, from then on, avoid situations in which agility is required because he is convinced that he is too clumsy to succeed.

When a child is repeatedly told by his parents or teachers that he is stupid, he comes to believe it. He starts thinking of himself as such. He then gives up intellectual efforts, feeling that his escape from ridicule lies in avoiding contest and competition."

from *Between Parent and Child*

by Dr. Haim Ginott  
Macmillan, 1965, p. 48



## THE QUIET ONES

One of the biggest problems I've come across talking to welfare mothers is their reluctance to fight or even speak up for themselves. Few of them (in the area where I live) will join a group at all, if it means they will have to become active to make things better for themselves. They have absolutely no faith in their own power to change their lives. This is because they never had any effective power, nor do they expect to. They haven't made or participated in most of the decisions that shaped their lives.

Their decisions were made for them by their fathers or husbands, like where they would live and how much money they would have to live on. Now those decisions are made for them by the state (welfare). They've become passive about their fate and are conditioned to fear the powers that control them, they're being realistic according to their life's experiences. Their words never had any weight before, why should they now? In fact, they will probably suffer reprisals for any initiative they take.

Chances are they have in their recent past, a rotten marriage they're trying to forget. After being told from the time they were children that the highest goal a woman can aspire to is getting married and having a family, they find that the carrot on a stick they've been chasing, the American dream of romantic love, is a horrible sham! This reinforces their feeling of failure and inadequacy. They might have had husbands that beat, intimidated, humiliated and degraded them, until they were convinced of their own inferiority, and filled with self-contempt. This shouldn't come as a surprise to anyone, because it's quite common, even if it didn't happen to you! Females are trained to accept male domination and fear male authority. Their rebelliousness is dealt with before it even has a chance to become conscious.

They've just given up. Maybe with great encouragement, support, and patience, some of them can be made to believe in themselves again. Their defeatist attitude stems from their many problems and also many of their problems are brought about and perpetuated by this defeatist attitude, which compounds all problems, and creates a downward spiral of helplessness in their lives.

Their apathy can be partly attributed to their low income which they have no control over, health problems that are neglected, and no relief from this stifling situation, as they can't even afford babysitters. They're drained of all energy that might be used for rebellion. To have a boyfriend to help them out is tempting but he usually turns out to be just another person to boss them around, exploit them, and have to beg for money from!

At one of the first female liberation meetings I went to, it was mentioned that some women had called up and said they wished they could come, but they knew their husbands wouldn't let them. One of the girls was astonished at this, she said no man could ever tell her what she should or shouldn't do. Contempt for these other women is implicit in this kind of remark, If we don't believe that women are bullied and oppressed by men in various degrees and different ways, then what is Female Liberation hollering about and fighting for?

Most women are too afraid, apathetic, or defensive of what little they have to try to change things. We're certainly no better than them, maybe a bit luckier though. We have no right to feel contempt, this will only make them feel more defensive and worthless, and will not win them to our cause. We're not more courageous or superior, though it would be comforting to think so. We just have a little more hope and energy, and maybe haven't suffered as many injustices as they have. If we actually feel indignant over the plight of women, and aren't just trying to change our own personal situations, we must reach these other women, they are the majority and we'll never succeed without them.

Betsy Warrior

*Since the oppression of woman has its cause in the will to perpetuate the family and to keep the patrimony intact, woman escapes complete dependency to the degree in which she escapes from the family*

*Simone de Beauvoir  
The Second Sex*



## A HISTORICAL AND CRITICAL ESSAY FOR BLACK WOMEN OF THE CITIES (excerpts)

by Patricia Murphy Robinson

Myths galvanize people and direct their form of culture. They are the fullness and depth of the people. They are the projections of their learned fears, anxiety, frustrations, hopes and the deepest unconscious contradictions of a civilization. In them is found not rational, linear thought but the inner contradictory reality of the human being. The American Dream is the end of a long, circuituous route away from the *animal-body, the land, woman and black* to condensed wealth (money, machines and property), cities, man and white. It is time now to break out of these deathly myths and this culture built on the oppression of women and blacks.

The western world was built on much more than colonialism and imperialism. It was built on the long-standing mythical split of male and female, as well as the split of body and mind. All things having to do with the animal body were repressed unconsciously. The repressed reality of life, like oppressed peoples, never stays repressed. It always threatens to rise and cause trouble to those who *need* to control others and themselves.

Men who controlled the making of myths and culture after the overthrow of women, saw to it that women were eventually relegated to the darkness, pressed down into that infamous, anarchic hell of the fables. Animals, women and black become the underground witches and demons in men's minds, their own feared, chaotic animal femininity. This split enabled the male head to soar to the celestial heavens, there to be worshiped in countless Apollian symbols.

The woman's body which receives, hosts and gives forth the future of the species had to be suppressed when the phallic aggressive male decided he needed power over others and that soft, feminine part of himself. Some thousands of years ago, the female was considered the Goddess of the Universe from which heaven and earth sprang. Certainly, the myth conforms to reality, out of one comes two. The female births both male and female. The Adam and Eve myth turns that reality on its head. The female now issues from the male. Hence we know how terrified the male had become of animal

reality to establish such a perversion of the truth.

Briffault in *The Mothers* traces the first animal family to the first human family and notes that the male's only role early in human history was insemination. Then he drifted off, leaving the female to take care of herself during pregnancy, birth and the nursing of the young. When men and women began to live together, what can be called culture began. But women controlled the first fruit or surplus, the child, by reason of its long need for protection before it can take care of itself. This was concrete power over the child and the male in those places with a warm climate and food and water readily available. There was no real need for a male procurer, a hunter.

Today in the time of the cities, cybernetics, nuclear power and space exploration, white men have developed a man-made body, the self-regulating machine of manless factories and laboratories. Man has now projected and sublimated his "holy" head into electronics and soared in "Apollo" to the moon. He struggles to perfect artificial insemination and a machine host for the human foetus. At last man has done away with the practical need for his own body. Now he must turn his attention to the danger the woman's body has always posed to his rule. He concerns himself with the biological control of reproduction of the species--as necessary to his sustained power over others as his present concentration on the reproduction of capital rather than the production of goods.

The notorious subjugation of human beings with black skins to the "other world" of dark hell and slavery took place rapidly as the Semites, Christians, Moslems and the middle-class industrial capitalists secured their conquests. Outcast black men and women were the menial slave laborers and the scavengers of the waste of the city. They were also the receptacle into which white male conquerors and their ladies could cast their own fears and guilt for this murder and rape; and how they trembled inwardly behind their armies at the expected retaliation of the have-nots. The long, neurotic, historical process by which these descendants of the hunters and the herders attempted to deny their biological reality was achieved through the projection onto others of what they could not stand



in themselves. They were animals who were born and died.

But through symbols and capitalism they could live forever. From this oppressed humanity they brought forth huge profits. The raw fruits from the earth were molded into vast monuments and empires of condensed wealth. Through interest, money could actually grow. And on top of it all they stood tall with their heads in the clouds; beneath, the black, bending bodies did not stir. From the pyramids to the cities, we are stuck with these monuments and great surpluses built on man's fearful need to be God.

When a group must be controlled, you always take away from them, their Gods, their very reflections of themselves and their inner being. But first you must use force:

*In the days when all the forest was evergreen, before the parakeet painted the autumn leaves red with the color from his breast, before the giants wandered through the woods with their heads above the tree-tops; in the days when the sun and moon walked the earth as man and wife, and many of the great sleeping mountains were human beings; in those far off days witchcraft was known only to the women of Onaland (Tierra del Fuego, South America). They kept their own particular lodge, which no man dared approach. The girls, as they neared womanhood, were instructed in the magic arts, learning how to bring sickness and even death to all those who displeased them.*

*The men lived in abject fear and subjugation. Certainly they had bows and arrows with which to supply the camp with meat, yet, they asked what use were such weapons against the witchcraft and sickness? This tyranny of the women grew from bad to worse until it occurred to the men that a dead witch was less dangerous than a live one. They conspired together to kill off all the women; and there ensued a great massacre, from which not one woman in human form escaped.*

The legend goes on to describe how the men waited for the little girls to grow up so they could have

wives. Meanwhile they plotted how they would have their own lodge (secret society) from which all women would forever be excluded. The menial tasks would be performed only by women. They would be frightened into submission by means of demons drawn from the men's imagination.

This is only one of thousands of such legends taken from all parts of the world that indicate some crisis occurred where leadership was wrested from the woman, either by force or seduction or both. Certainly there was great fear of women and a sense of being oppressed by their inner and reproductive powers. The great earth mother could bring forth life and inexplicably take it away. This was one kind of power. In fact, it could only be overcome in most of the folk stories by tools of war in the hands of muscular men--the murder of the women and the great earth goddess by the phallic aggressive men, determined to have their external power over nature and its symbolic representative, woman.

In highly organized hunting societies with their sacred animal totems, women were separated and confined to the domestic role. The great hunters occupied those areas where there was much large game and the efforts required were herculean. Africa, North and South America, Asia have great historic legends of the mighty hunters and horse herders, the determined individualists and the male supremacists. The split of the male and female is well documented during this paleolithic period.

Even though hunters roamed the banks of the Congo so did agricultural communities arise there. The plant as well as the animal were the main sources of food. In those villages where the women produced food by planting, both woman and the earth were valuable. The woman who tilled the land came to own it. Man was almost superfluous except for his sexual mating role.

Anthropologists describe this period as the famous matriarchy when woman, owning the land and having much to say about the distribution of the surplus, had not only sacred power but economic and social power as well. In West Africa, particularly, secret male councils were formed in reaction to this female dominance. Unlike the more aggressive hunting societies, males



were elected to such lodges. Men from other tribes were encouraged to join so that a secret council might spread through many tribes over a large area. The sacred divinities were still often female. The moon, symbol of the Great Mother, was a basic part of their life. These secret societies did not absolutely exclude women. She was kept symbolically among the group Gods.

These lodges gradually developed into councils of chiefs or elders and the communal village was eventually ruled by a male tribal aristocracy. With polygamy women and children were finally subjugated and exploited by a male aristocracy as was most of the lower strata of the African village. It was on this feudal development in African society that European feudal states were able to build a cooperative venture with African chiefs for the beginning of the slave trade.

In the rise of the cities the suppression of the female is concrete and complete. Cities developed out of this surplus produced by the countryside. It is on the increase of this surplus that the growth of cities depend. Cities fed by an economic surplus are essentially not needed and superabundant. Control of the surplus whether it be of children (labor), food, goods leads to special privilege and prestige for the elite of a society. The root meaning of prestige is deception and enchantment. No force of arms can control whole peoples forever. Deceive the oppressed into believing you are a God. Make them believe that you are supernaturally powerful and they will offer themselves up to you, at least all those who have learned to despise and hate themselves through their lowly-defined class position. Finally these lower class people have only labor as their wealth, not the products of their labor. This is the alienation in which the male industrial ruling class took root.

From the early times the surplus has been given to the Gods, male and female and to their earthly representatives. The rest was divided communally and later stored. Those who could specialize and increase the surplus might have the power to raise their social status in the hierarchy. Through deception and enchantment, the tactics of the shaman, the trickster, the medicine man, the class hierarchy grew rigid and power over the poor and women was made concrete, first

by force and then deception and seduction. The prestige of the aristocracy (kings) and the upper classes (the entrepreneurs) is maintained on psychological power which developed into sacred and religious power. As the ruling classes' religious and psychological enchantment of the oppressed is weakened by shifting historical forces, they must revert to their original force of arms to protect their huge surplus and to hold down the rebellious people.

The village was a communal gathering place in basic equilibrium with itself and its surrounding. The walled in city was a separation from nature. From the fields and forests the city attracted men who felt the need for great expression of physical prowess and control over others in daily life. The hunters and herders entered the cities, bringing their individualism and male supremacy. Sacred temples, where gathered the money-lenders, are the base of our banks and where metallurgy was turned into wasteful ornaments to adorn the new rulers of the world--men. The city became the religious monument of male Gods, springing from, yet in opposition to the village.

Cities represent the mythical power of kings, gods, money and gold. They represent the male's psychological need for the "higher" life, away from the human body and away from the human female, the peasant and that view of life. Man began to assume superhuman proportions symbolically. Concretely, he was the exploiter of lower-class human beings.

The city is primarily masculine and reflects that revolt against the feminine principles of connection with nature that began in the paleolithic period with the northern hunters and the southern herders. The revolt was decisive with the wide acceptance of Judeo-Christianity and the Moslem religions. Women, now no longer in the image of the great Gods, became decisively powerless.

James Boggs, in an unpublished manuscript, writes:

*Black men from the time they were captured back in Africa with the help of tribal chiefs lost their domination over the black woman. For a long period in black slave society in the United States there was no domination of the female by the male. Both were entirely dominated by the whites. African male domination*



*continued in the African bush, where hardly touched by the white settlers, African elders could continue their male supremacist customs and control of the land.*

Essentially the white master controlled the black slave family and slave groupings by superior force of arms. The main responsibility of the field female slave was to produce male babies--the labor commodity needed for the master's fields. Male field slaves were used as studs. The stories that come down to us by word of mouth from our slave great-grandmothers tell of stag pens throughout Virginia and South Carolina where "black bucks" were made to copulate with indentured white females from England.

This arrangement was a good basis for establishing faithful house slaves to look to the physical comfort and entertainment of the master and his family, since the master controlled the children from all black unions. He usually allowed these lighter-skinned blacks in the big house and slowly created another class of slaves in addition to the house slaves. This one was based on color as well as social position in the slave hierarchy. The children from the master's union with the slave woman were a part of this class. Many from this group became the educated, multi-lingual parlor entertainers, in the images of the feudal court-jesters.

The first form of solidified relations between black male and female were generally decided by the master who thought that a certain black was so good he ought to settle down, usually with the cook. In order to keep a good male house-servant "tame" he gave him a black woman for a permanent mate. They could both imitate the master and his lady and achieve social prestige. This could be carried on among field slaves as well in order to have responsible field foremen, slave quarter guards and black bounty hunters who returned escaped slaves to the plantation for money. This slave hierarchy developed by the master plantation class for its own support decreased the need for constant force against the slave population.

The master had the right and practiced it freely to have sexual freedom even with the black woman he allowed the black male. At anytime he could countermand the black slave's orders of the black female. At best

the house-servant or field foreman was sharing "his woman" with the white master.

Among the field slaves the master could not control the male-female relationship to the extent he could control the house slave's relationships. Among field slaves, man-woman ties were very unstable. The male could be sold, beaten, killed for reasons bearing on the productivity of his labor e.g. his age, his speed and usefulness in the fields, number of children from his matings, the degree of submissiveness to the slave role. His brutal oppression and distance from privilege and social status planted the seeds of hatred and revolt. The master could be paternalistic to the house slaves but was forced by the fear of retaliation to be hostile and sadistic to the field slaves.

The field woman was a laborer beside men, a begetter of children who was let out to the other plantations for breeding. She was responsible for cooking, feeding and care of the slaves, midwifery and finally in old age, the mammy for other slave children. If she rose in social status then she became a mammy to the white children.

The black male slave's position under slavery in the United States was similar to the position of the male during the early agricultural stages of history when women owned the land and controlled the surplus. He had no responsibility for an extended family unit beyond the sexual act and conception--which he oftentimes had to steal if he was not assigned. The family unit was, as in earliest history, the mother and the children, but usually for a limited time. Extended family units were not helpful to increase production and judicious use of labor.

The black woman who worked in the big house and the fields acted not as a dominant factor over the black male but as his protector and savior. Her primary strategy was to allow herself to be sexually used, often to save the life of the black male. She could speak out to the master and to the white boss if she pleased him with good food, good sex, good care of his children, a role which the master's own woman was seldom allowed to pursue. White women were the vicarious display of the master's economic and social position, his property as well. A vocal link between



the white man and the black man, the black woman often forced opinions and bargained successfully for whatever pitiful reforms were possible under slavery.

Among all freed slave society there was a loose family relationship but most particularly among field slaves, who were still tied to the land they could not own and were only nominally free. But with the rise of industrialization after the defeat of the South, they could hire themselves out as hired hands. Whites receded from direct domination to indirect domination. Black males still had to accede to the white boss on whom he depended for a job. But the black woman was still the farm worker anchored to the land much as her African sister is to this very day. In the towns she could be a domestic and a little higher in social status. It was only during World War II that she, like the black male, was allowed into the factories and then only as a desperately needed semi-skilled laborer, earning smaller wages than even the black male.

Generally the black male looked upward toward the master, his boss and his material possessions, property, e.g. the white woman, the land, the factories, education, culture and its material extravagances. But the highest piece of personal property, the white woman, was off-limits except in the North where a few black men could get a white woman descended from indentured slavery and usually economically and socially oppressed herself.

After emancipation the black man got his black woman but his range of domination was only in the home, not in the public arena. The white man could still counter his orders to the black woman by removing him from a job, a home or from the land. Only in the small arena of the black family could the black man hit back during slavery, after emancipation and up practically to the present time. The use of the black woman as a whipping post reflected the stigma the black man carried within himself and from the ruling white society, that of a whipped person, a cur dog.

Because this tortured black animal can't beat the master, he beats his black woman, that bitch dog. She retaliates by any means necessary and the cycle continues as both are unable to bring the contradiction to its logical explosive conclusion and synthesis--confrontation with THE MAN. It is understandable, for so many black

males and females have grown to love the white man's money, property, and military prowess, and assuming the master's possessions are power, they tremble in envy as they dream of taking the master's place.

But the bitter joke is that money and property and machines are only projections and sublimations of the power in the body, not power itself. These physical entrapments were the adornments and possessions of inadequate kings and queens and later rich merchants, absurdly wearing the masks of a Protestant God. They could only rule over the lower classes if the latter believed they were Gods and awesomely powerful. It does take two, after all, to oppress--the oppressed have to be seduced into the supernatural belief by these symbolic representations of power so that they give up themselves, their labor and the products thereof.

The long patriarchy and aggressive male rule is also based on the illusion of male power suffered by exploited and self-hating black and white women. Historical movement charts the struggle of the repressed dreams of oppressed peoples to rise and return to their proper equilibrium. Social unrest, wars and insurrections, loosen the inner binds of the individuals and the outer binds of exploited human beings. It is said that true revolutions begin from the bottom up and from the inside out. There is such great power in the lower recesses of our people and deep within us all. Perhaps our struggle is to radiate it rather than to possess it.

The American Dream is a bold, heady, ruthless dream--away from the black woman, the very image of the Great Earth Mother and the Black Madonna. For us black women, "motherfucker" is now a definitive, historical term symbolizing the first murder, the murder of the Great Earth Mother repeated endlessly to this day.

In the black world, the black man could only be a man at the black woman's expense. In the western world, the white man could only be a man at the black man's and the white woman's expense. All of it seduction and trickery, a prestige game, dying myths, absorbed by us all. We vomit them up!

Revolutionaries are the smashers of myths and the destroyers of illusions. They have always died and lived again to build new myths. They dare to dream of a utopia, a new time of equilibrium and synthesis.



A HISTORICAL AND CRITICAL ESSAY FOR BLACK WOMEN OF THE CITIES is reprinted here only in part due to length. Patricia Robinson wrote the essay in June, 1969 for: Robin, Maryilyn, Carrietta, Maureen, Aretha, Celeste, Denise, Lenise, Dale, Saundra, Donna, Linda, Wanda, and their beautiful brothers, but most of all for Wilma Sanchez and Norma Abdullah, courageous women and brilliant theoreticians.

It is the son who has the real chance to turn spy on the father-rulers, who have for too long deceived the people and enchanted and enslaved the world population.

Patricia Robinson, from an unpublished manuscript on Malcolm X as a destroyer of myths, April, 1969

ONLY THROUGH THE PEOPLE'S  
OWN STRUGGLES AND EFFORTS  
CAN THEIR EMANCIPATION BE  
ACHIEVED, MAINTAINED AND  
CONSOLIDATED. IT CANNOT  
BE BESTOWED OR GRANTED BY  
ANY OUTSIDER. NOR CAN IT  
BE FOUGHT FOR OR SECURED  
THROUGH THE EFFORTS OF  
ANYONE EXCEPT THE PEOPLE  
THEMSELVES.

Liu Shao-ch'i

What was unfortunate for her was that while not becoming a fellow workman with the laborer, she was also excluded from the human *Mitsein*. The fact that woman is weak and of inferior productive capacity does not explain this exclusion; it is because she did not share his way of working and thinking, because she remained in bondage to life's mysterious processes, that the male did not recognize in her a being like himself.



In organized patriarchal society the slave was only a beast of burden with a human face; the master exercised tyrannical authority, which exalted his pride--and he turned against woman. Everything he gained he gained against her; the more powerful he became, the more she declined.

In particular, when he became owner of the land, he claimed also ownership of woman. Formerly he was possessed by the mana, by the land; now he has a soul, owns certain lands; freed from Woman, he now demands for himself a woman and a posterity. He wants the work of the family, which he uses to improve his fields, to be totally his, and this means that the workers must belong to him: so he enslaves his wife and children. He needs heirs, in whom his earthly life will be prolonged because he hands down his property to them, and who will perform for him after his death the rites and observances needed for the repose of his soul. The cult of domestic gods is superposed upon the organization of private property, and the inheritor fulfills a function at once economic and mystic. Thus from the day when agriculture ceased to be an essentially magic operation and first became creative labor, man realized that he was a generative force; he laid claim to his children and to his crops simultaneously.

Simone de Beauvoir



## THE ORGASM MYSTIQUE

Women knew they experienced orgasm before this fact was scientifically discovered. The interesting factor of this phenomena is not so much that it occurs: it is the outcry that is made over its occurrence.

If anything has replaced the "feminine mystique" of the 1950's, it is an "orgasm" mystique. To the male mind, and often to the female mind, a good screw will cure most female problems: hangnail, psychosis, malaria.

Obviously, the better orgasm has become a mechanism of behavior control. Women's magazines abound with articles implying that the primary function of the wife and/or mistress is to constantly provide erotic stimulation to the male. Perhaps a candlelight picnic on the living room floor will jounce your man's libido.

The program for the potentially enticing female is staggering: Ben Franklin's self-improvement plan is its cousin. Plastic surgery, exercise, make-up, psychoanalysis, a "swinging" job, the ability to produce a gourmet meal in forty minutes flat, applying false lashes while the soufflé rises: all undertaken to make the male kindly enough disposed to bend all his efforts for a half-hour to give the female the "earth-moving" orgasm he has scientifically decreed she cannot be happy, healthy, and well-adjusted without. He then showers, and relaxes, while the "emancipated" female washes the dishes.

Many men are captive of this mystique, and are driving themselves to impotence trying to equal the virile stud of a Mailer novel, or to service the accelerated desires of a wife suddenly turned nymphomaniac on the Pill and sexual illumination.

This frantic interest in sex is a reversal of our puritan mores; the reversal is of such fanatic proportions as to make one wonder which is worse--the disease or the cure? The "new" morality is used as a pacifier to keep women from seeing that they are getting the bone instead of the steak, and to keep men in a state of arousal that will preoccupy their leisure and keep them off the streets.

Graham Greene says, "After all, there are only 32 ways of driving a nail into a hole...and there are less than that number of endearing words." (*A Burnt-Out Case*) Yet we are encouraged to allow our sex to drive us,

and to ignore the premise of civilization, that spirit, mind, and emotion should combine into a harmonious entity.

A woman pursuing satisfaction of her sex urge as the be-all of existence is unconcerned with social change, and she is a prime consumer target. Even the most sophisticated of us are unaware of the many ways in which we are controlled for the purposes of economy and "domestic stability:" but it is becoming more apparent. In *The New Industrial State*, Galbraith states that our economy now operates on the premise that it controls our leisure spending as well as our employed spending (what we produce at work.). The leisure of the sexually emancipated woman is structured around her hair falls, contact lenses, permanent waves, clothes, vacations, apartment furnishings, sports.

In terms of sex, the real question is: why should a woman have to "get" what is rightfully hers, as a human being--consideration, tenderness, sexual concern? Why should she present herself as an expensive object to be taken or rejected, like a can on a supermarket shelf, by a partner who is forced into the position of being the sole consenting party, rather than a partner in a mutual agreement? This stance is humiliating; it promulgates male supremacy under a new disguise; it destroys a basis of honesty.

In human terms, how much intelligence, energy, and time, are consumed in this ritual, a ritual imposed from outside ourselves, that may often be meaningless to the people involved, indeed, even debilitating to the spirit. How much of life we miss in our involvement in this ritual. The price we pay for this involvement is a perpetuation of the system that enslaves us, with our own consent.

Lanayre Liggera  
May, 1969

*The Roman woman of the old Republic had a place on earth, but she was chained to it for lack of abstract rights and economic independence; the Roman woman of the decline was the typical product of false emancipation, having only an empty liberty in a world of which man remained in fact the sole master: she was free- but for nothing.*

*Simone de Beauvoir      The Second Sex*



## ALL OR NOTHING

After delusions have been dispelled that dedication to the ideals of female liberation necessitates vows of celibacy or homosexual relationships, we attempt to articulate the quality of the relationships that are ideally desirable between men and women. It's easy enough to state that we should engage only in honorable relationships with men. But to define honorable and to attempt to structure our lives in this fashion involves painful re-evaluation.

The problem that most of us face is that we are dependent on man-woman relationships for our identities. Hence, we're extremely insecure without them. This kind of dependence is not a part of the inter-dependence that is implied in any relationship. A healthy relationship consists of strong and independent individuals who with self-respect enter a relationship with mutual appreciation and the desire for what can be learned from each other. An unhealthy dependence arises from the hope (usually on the part of the woman) to gain self-respect through the relationship.

The implications of this are far greater than that we demand that men take a hand in the responsibilities of the household. It also means more than that we attempt to remind our men when they have made sexist statements or judgments. We are so engrained in a manner of operation that is based on constant concern about men's thoughts and approbation that it's very difficult for us to comprehend much less accept their outlook toward and expectations of us. Most men are totally prepared to give a great deal in their friendships with each other. They expect to spend alot of time discussing personal as well as social issues. As their respect is mutual, they never feel put out when the situation implies a need for their sympathy or assistance. Yet their attitude toward us is fundamentally different. They don't expect to establish as close an understanding with us, so they are content with the psychological and material benefits that are inherent in most contemporary man-woman relationships. This means an ego-gratification for them and necessitates total humiliation and self-deprecation for us. They represent demands made by us of their time, money or emotional concern. They simply don't expect to give as much as we, as a result of our training, are prepared and eager to

give. The relationship runs very smoothly as long as we continue to give, and accept in return token or superficial appreciation or reciprocity. But when we attempt to pull away from our history and re-evaluate our situations with men, we can no longer accept men's definition of an "honorable" relationship. The emotional transition is very difficult until we acquire enough self-confidence to realize that we should want no part of a relationship in which we are reduced to so few possibilities and such a low level of humanity. There is no shame involved with abstention from these kinds of relationships with men. At this point in history, this is the only way we can become total persons. We are working hard to overcome those weaknesses that we have acquired in the course of our personal and collective histories. Until men wake up and start to work towards overcoming their oppressive attitudes, it is certainly healthier for us to stay away. The excitement of now available opportunities and the self-respect that we gain is fantastic reward. This freed state of mind provides immense amounts of energy which can only allow a more constructive and progressive existence.

Lisa Leghorn  
October, 1969

*...because she owns nothing, woman does not enjoy the dignity of being a person; she herself forms a part of the patrimony of a man: first of her father, then of her husband.*

*The adolescent boy, too, undoubtedly dreams of woman; he longs for her; but she will never be more than an element in his life: she does not sum up his destiny. But the girl, since childhood and whether she intends to stay within or go beyond the bounds of femininity, has looked to the male for fulfillment and escape...he is the liberator...he holds the keys to happiness.*

Simone de Beauvoir  
*The Second Sex*



## ONE STEP BACKWARD

Tutoring men

back to        how far    can one go  
and still go back?

Isolation from

hopeless    decadence    interest vested  
too late

Arrogant voices

Good arguments

Clever lines

Privilege

lucky to have none  
he says  
now he calls me a  
meglomaniac  
for speaking out

Outrage

Anger

Contempt

Who are these Self-Appointed?

Do not waste time    on those    who want  
only to build barriers

Fight

There is no hate  
but a mistaken image  
of oneself  
in revolution  
does not reveal

So fight forward

Look forward.

Roxanne Dunbar  
June, 1969

## SEPARATION

"For their own salvation and the good of the movement, women must form their own groups and work for Female Liberation". Judith Brown.

The white male "radical" movement has taken upon its shoulders the responsibility for the liberal "white man's burden" of uplifting the downtrodden peoples. When liberals began the Civil Rights Movement to help blacks, the blacks realized that the white master was trying to get a little something for his black slave. They separated to form a black movement, a black identity. Liberals never tried to "help" women; women realized their slavery and began to fight against it before males offered them a "helping hand". Now that Female Liberation movements are active throughout the country, white male radicals are offering their aid. They demand that we become caucuses of their organizations, to share in their projects and busy-work. They offer the liberal arguments of integrating male and female "To help each other out". Instead of attempting to sit down and analyze their attitudes about sexism, they seek to "help" their "sisters" by separating them and getting them involved in the male organization. Rather than trying to understand what Female Liberation is about--a total analysis for social and political revolution--they attempt to assimilate women and women's issues into their program of thought and action. Like the capitalist society, the white male movement, rather than attempting to change and grow with new ideas, tries to co-opt and fit them into their already functioning framework.

Women, however, have learned a lesson from the black struggle. We do not intend to waste years letting men do things for us or trying to do things as men would have us do them. We've done that too long. White males do not wish us to be equal. They have too much to lose--their control of illogical, defenseless, irrational females. They don't want to lose this form of power. The blacks learned that whites don't really care about blacks, only about "doing something for someone less fortunate", and only as long as that "something" doesn't deprive whites of the control of the "someone less fortunate". The white masters didn't face racism until the blacks refused to do as they were told. Women must refuse to



bow and scrape before the omnipotent white male or we can never stand upright. White males divide us by allotting us token positions within their movement--but only as long as we don't get too "uppity." As long as we "know our place" and help to further the smooth functioning of the male organization, we are tolerated, even encouraged.

White male radicals have never questioned the roles of men and women that are accepted by society. They have modified these roles to benefit their own male ends. Such as the "freeing" of the female sexually, thereby increasing his access to more "ass." These roles are a benefit to the male, but lead to the oppression of the female. The males refuse to give up that which benefits them unless they are forced to. These roles are the center of the oppression of the female. They are also the basis on which the movement has been structured. This role playing has caused the destruction of our society, our world. Man's dominant, powerful role has been the basis for his attempt to control and rape his environment. He must be the "master" of all he encounters--he must rule. In order for anyone to succeed in his world, they must do so on white man's terms. Queens in Europe and women in high positions today function in the male role. Blacks must assume the white male role to succeed. There is no other measurement offered, only white maleness.

Women are declaring themselves independent. The male is too subtle and clever to be confronted on his own terms; besides, we've been dealing in his terms too long. We are dealing in human terms--equal terms. We no longer accept our servitude. We cannot enter an organization which offers a paternalistic, guiding hand to show us the way.

Ann MacKinnon and Robin Garrett  
from *Armageddon*, October, 1969  
University of New Hampshire,  
Durham, New Hampshire

## I AM A WOMAN

I am a woman. Ready made for public consumption (men's consumption). I have been trained in all the arts of womanhood. I perform perfectly, as a machine that automatically recharges its batteries without the care, concern or aid of its owner. I cook, sew, clean, give birth to and care for children, fuck, iron and dress up when it pleases my owner or aids his business deals. I do all these things FREE and without complaint. My service to humanity is helping my husband-making it possible for him to make his contributions, inspiring him to work harder. My greatest creative act is raising my children. They're beautiful children. They look just like their father and they're such a source of joy and pride to him.

I am a woman. I am confused, scared. Why do men look at me that way as I cross the street? (maybe my slip is showing) What's that man thinking when he looks at my skirt like that? It makes me feel obscene. I'm scared to walk alone here. I'd like to run, but I'm too tired. Besides, it's awfully hard to run in a skirt. Why aren't men attacked so often? What's wrong with a city that doesn't allow women the freedom to walk alone in privacy and safety? Is it the same everywhere? Oh, why did I have to be a woman? Where can I look as I walk by the men outside these bars? I wish I could hide! If I look at the pavement they might not bother me too much. But then I won't be able to see if one follows me or tries to grab me or my purse. Yet if I look at them, they'll think I'm looking for business. But I can't pretend that I don't see them! I'll cross the street. But then the men over there will think that I'm coming near them for the same reason.

Why a woman?

Can't wait to get home.

I'm a woman. I can't be proud of my heritage but I am proud to be a human being. I've learned self-defense so I'm no longer scared to walk alone. In fact, I feel really good- so proud of my strength. It's funny the way men look at me now. They think I'm a freak not to want to dress for them. But I'm not going to submit to them any longer. I refuse to let them scare me. Rather,



I'm repulsed by their oppressive needs. If they need to stomp on me to feel good, let them feel bad. If they need to scare me to feel powerful, let them feel weak. If they need me to be "feminine" (with all its degrading connotations) to feel "masculine", LET THEM BE WITHOUT DEFINITION. WOMEN HAVE NEVER HAD A DEFINITION OF THEIR OWN. LET ME DEFINE MYSELF. And I defy any man who tries to stop me. I know their weakness. Without me to gratify them, they're scared-frantic. They'll search for another to boost their egos. But no longer will we serve to augment their lives. No longer.

Lisa Leghorn

October, 1969

*In truth women have never set up female values in opposition to male values; it is man who, desirous of maintaining masculine prerogatives, has invented that divergence. Men have presumed to create a feminine domain-the kingdom of life, of immanence-only in order to lock up women therein.*

*In any case man's justification is reached by other roads; whereas in a world in which woman is essentially defined as female, it is as female alone that she can find justification.*

Simone de Beauvoir  
*The Second Sex*

ARE MEN THE ENEMY? An Examination  
JAYNE WEST, examiner

Please use a #2 lead ~~pencil~~ pencil when taking this test. Look only at your own paper except in an emergency. No talking, gum chewing, swearing, or primping during the test. In case of fire or nuclear attack, the above rules will be suspended. You are now ready to begin. Don't. We'll tell you when to start. You may begin in exactly a few minutes.

True or False

1. \_\_\_ Woman's work is never done.
2. \_\_\_ You can't tell a book by its cover.
3. \_\_\_ Housework can be fun.
4. \_\_\_ Women make the best mothers.
5. \_\_\_ A female dog is referred to as a bitch.
6. \_\_\_ One of the more degrading terms that can be applied to a man is "son of a bitch."
7. \_\_\_ The discovery that she is castrated is a turning point in a girl's life. (Freud)
8. \_\_\_ Life is a bowl of cherries.
9. \_\_\_ A little loving goes a long way.
10. \_\_\_ The ten most wanted men are men.
11. \_\_\_ The opposite of tomboy is sissy.
12. \_\_\_ Beauty is as beauty does.
13. \_\_\_ Intelligent women are often ugly.
14. \_\_\_ The best chefs in the world are men.
15. \_\_\_ A girl should find out what a man's interests are and learn about them so as to have more pleasant conversations with him.
16. \_\_\_ I can do a pushup.
17. \_\_\_ When the blank says check one M\_F\_, I do so without hesitation or contemplation.
18. \_\_\_ Some of the finest athletes in the world are women.
19. \_\_\_ Sen. Margaret Chase Smith could have been President if she had only remained in the race.
20. \_\_\_ Women when angered are capable of extreme forms of violence and insanity.
21. \_\_\_ I find it very convenient to carry a purse since I haven't any pockets.
22. \_\_\_ The way to a man's heart is through his stomach.
23. \_\_\_ *Flighty* is often used when referring to men.
24. \_\_\_ A permanent isn't really.
25. \_\_\_ Gentlemen prefer blondes. (cont.)



(Exam. cont.)

26. \_\_\_ I think that it was certainly necessary that the  
Mormons had many wives.
27. \_\_\_ I often envy the convenience men enjoy in re-  
gard to urination.
28. \_\_\_ Women are made not born.

#### Multiple Choice

1. Most rapes are committed by
  - a. women
  - b. children
  - c. men (perverts)
  - d. I am unable to distinguish rape from ordinary sexual relations.
2. When I am yelled at on the street I am
  - a. flattered
  - b. annoyed
  - c. astonished
  - d. sure I have been recognized
3. When I am yelled at on the street I respond by
  - a. lowering my head and walking quicker
  - b. smiling sweetly and nodding
  - c. addressing myself to the specific content of the yeller and applying appropriately
  - d. pretending that it was not I who was yelled at and that I am not in that place and that he is not real and I am not real and thus simply extracting myself from the situation.
4. Which of these things do you prefer to be called?
  - a. lady
  - b. woman
  - c. female
  - d. girl
  - e. none of the above
5. The reason I keep my legs together when sitting is
  - a. some of my underwear has holes in it
  - b. my legs get cold if I don't
  - c. my mother always told me to and it's a hard to break habit
  - d. I like to keep my privates private
6. When I was a little girl I wanted to be a
  - a. nurse
  - b. cowgirl
  - c. teacher
  - d. secretary
  - e. boy

(cont.)

(exam. cont.)

7. If I had a baby girl, I would be
  - a. dissappointed
  - b. I wouldn't care as long as it was healthy
  - c. burdened
  - d. quite annoyed with the Pill
8. When I play games or sports with a man
  - a. I let him win
  - b. He always beats me
  - c. I try to be athletic and healthy so he will play with me again
  - d. I just play the best I can and don't worry about the outcome
9. Which of the following things can a man do better than a woman?
  - a. cook
  - b. sew
  - c. masturbate
  - d. all the above
10. If I could do away with anything I wanted, the first thing I would do away with is
  - a. the family
  - b. the state
  - c. private property
  - d. menstrual periods
  - e. all the above

DRAW A MAN

(cont.)



(Exam. cont.)

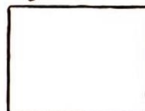
Fill the Blank

1. \_\_\_\_\_ is never \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Make a list of famous women who are not known by Mrs. \_\_\_\_\_.
3. My most embarrassing moment was when \_\_\_\_\_.
4. My least embarrassing moment was when \_\_\_\_\_.
5. In the Orthodox Jewish worship it is said by men:  
"Thank God that I was not born a \_\_\_\_\_."

Matching

- |                  |       |  |
|------------------|-------|--|
| a. shorts        | _____ | 1. boy or girl who plays like a girl               |
| b. panties       | _____ | 2. unmarried woman                                 |
| c. bachelor      | _____ | 3. woman who is somewhat free sexually             |
| d. old maid      | _____ | 4. men's underwear                                 |
| e. sissy         | _____ | 5. unmarried man                                   |
| f. tomboy        | _____ | 6. women's underwear                               |
| w. three         | _____ | 7. man who is free sexually                        |
| t. unlimited     | _____ | 8. number of dribbles allowed in girl's basketball |
| q. playboy       | _____ | 9. man who sheds tears                             |
| h. compassionate | _____ | 10. number of dribbles allowed in men's basketball |
| u. whining       | _____ | 11. woman who sheds tears                          |
|                  | _____ | 12. boy who plays like a girl                      |

draw a woman



Essay

1. Discuss the variations in tone possible when asking a male druggist this question: "Do you have Tampax Super?"
2. Discuss the population distribution along sexual lines were parents able to determine the sex of their offspring
3. Discuss your motive for taking this test.
4. Discuss how a woman can have her cake and eat it too.
5. Discuss anything you want.
6. Erase all marks from this paper (except your responses) and pass the paper up to the person to your left. If there is no one on your left, walk to the center aisle and place your paper on the floor and sit upon it. Anyone doing anything that strange is certain to be noticed and helped.

GOOD LUCK! YOU HAVE BEEN A GOOD TESTER AND THAT IS NOT NOTHING

## WHERE ARE YOU WOMEN GOING?

In response to the two previous female liberation journals, we have received a multitude of requests for information concerning our means of organization. Some women have been asking about and seem to want to form a national organization. To be considering any type of formal or structural organization at this time appears to be extremely premature. So few women have been exposed to the thoughts of female liberation that all our efforts should be directed towards the most effective and extensive means of making this thought available to women locally.

Formal organization can be dangerous for women at this point for it might provide a substitute for women's former dependence on men. It is too easy to become valueless in a large, structured organization. The energy which comes from everyone involved creating and initiating activities without directives is essential in developing a mass movement. We also face the possibility of women absorbing the undesirable mechanisms of power that characterize politics in the society at large. We have seen the need for a change in power relations. To say simply that we want MORE power is not just a half-truth; it is basically wrong. Women HAVE power. Everyone exerts power. The kind of power that women now exert is certainly the most demeaning and the least conducive to self-respect, but the mechanics of manipulation and trickery (a woman behind every great man) are the only tools we've had for effecting action. Any women who have "made it" in a man's world have had to exert some of the aggressive power given to men. We want to exert collective strength-not individual competitive power which is what the society offers anyone who can survive within it. It would be too easy for us to fall into the same patterns of thought and action as men, were we to establish a national super-structure. None of us should vie for positions of excessive authority that result from the hierarchical formation of national organizations. In the future, when a large structure is possible, the decentralized structure of a cellular organization with close communication between groups will probably be desirable. But at this point in history, even cellular formations are premature. We need right now to be flexible and concern ourselves only with the most effective means of



communicating to women whatever ideas we formulate.

When we first heard, read or thought about female liberation we had many questions and apprehensions. We found that the most productive way to think through many of these questions was to get together with interested women in small discussion groups. In this way the realization of the similarity of our situations and socialization brought us close together. The value of talking to other women in this way never diminishes. We next began to think in terms of how we could relate our thoughts to other women. The concept of "organizing" women has seemed a very bad one, for it implies and presupposes separation from those one is organizing. Our enthusiasm has been our organizing tool. We talk every chance we get, to every woman we meet.

We have found that writing and leafleting is one of the most effective ways of reaching women with our ideas. Some of us at universities have put together small newspapers to circulate to women on campus. Others of us have written and publicly distributed critiques of contemporary situations, movies, etc. from the point of view of female liberation. Our journal production has required only our writing and little work by a few people. The cost is quickly offset by its rapid sale. The public media, which profits so from the exploitation of females, has shown great interest in the female liberation movement. Though we cannot prevent the media from exploiting the movement, we do not depend on the media or attempt to exploit it to our advantage. The media's interest is in creating superstars (positive or negative) for "human-interest" features. Another means of transmitting information has been local conferences. These conferences should be used as information centers rather than opportunities for political debate over rhetorical questions or abstract and false issues.

One of our most important activities has been our self-defense training. Several women took the responsibility for training quickly, and are now teaching other women, some of whom will also become teachers.

We have found that attempting to talk to men about female liberation, particularly in private, has been a waste of time. Their responses are almost all the same--boring and repetitive. They can relate to women only sexually and are interested solely in whether or not the sex supply will diminish. A few have gotten "smart" and temper their

responses to be sure they will not be deprived of their woman, or women. But men are not going to change by our talking to them. Only a strong, collective, separate female liberation movement will force some men to change, and the others will be neutralized. (Of course, in the wake of our movement, young females and males will be socialized differently; also older males, somewhat free of their "drive for power" may best be able to teach younger men something about the psychology of the oppressor.)

One of our most difficult problems as women has been our inability to justify or respect our existence. We need to feel our ability to get along without men, to become secure, self-respecting and autonomous people capable of collective action. Since our relationships with men have been the cause of this inability, we need to establish ourselves away from men, to the extent that such is possible.

Out of our loose coalition of small affiliated (discussion) groups have emerged small groups of women working together on particular projects. One such project is the production of this journal. There are female liberation karate classes. A small group meets regularly to plan demands and action around free community infant and childcare centers which would be open 24 hours a day. There are many reading groups engaged in the study of the history of female oppression. Other study groups are attempting to extract analytical tools from revolutionary social science. To aid communication between groups, some women in the Boston area have started a newsletter. Some of us have opened an office as a work and information center. Several women are creating a library of writings on women. Few women are in only one such group. Many are in two or three plus their own original affiliation groups.

No one has set out and "organized" women in this way. Such a structure has developed nationally. All attempts to force an artificial superstructure have failed. That failure does not reveal some fatal flaw in our movement; rather it reveals the irrelevance of a superstructure at the present time.

Roxanne Dunbar and Lisa Leghorn  
October, 1969



## DIALECTICS (written for summer reading group)

*This dialectical world outlook teaches us primarily how to observe and analyze the movement of opposites in different things and, on the basis of such analysis, to indicate the methods for resolving contradictions. It is therefore most important for us to understand the law of contradiction in things in a concrete way.*

*Mao Tsetung*

During the past two years a female liberation movement has emerged in this country and is continuing to grow among women from many different backgrounds. Female consciousness is becoming stronger and surer as time goes on. During this period of revolutionary awakening we will learn to study and understand the many aspects of our oppression and the connections and implications our movement has for the larger world revolution in progress now. At this time the application of ready-made "Marxist" formulas to the women's movement amounts to a dismissal of that movement. Moreover, it is a dismissal of the dialectical method and a lack of faith in people's ability to resolve contradictions.

There should be no fear that we will develop a non-revolutionary (non-Marxist) outlook if we constantly apply the principles of materialist dialectics to all subjects and are willing to discard or alter those of our ideas which become obsolete according to changes and development in objective conditions. What we need most now is to make a thorough study of that which touches upon our oppression. We want to learn for ourselves how to "understand the law of contradiction in things in a concrete way."

Lenin practiced the dialectical method in his study of imperialism, the contradictions of which had not completely manifested themselves in Marx's day. Lenin recognized the need to analyze this important aspect of capitalism. In doing so he did not reject Marxist philosophy, nor did he "improve" it. What he did was apply it and add to the existing body of revolutionary knowledge.

Marx and Engels believed that the abolition of the family would be essential to communist revolutions. They declared that the family must be destroyed both in theory and in practice. At that time they saw the working class family all but destroyed, so they did not leave us a complete exposition of the relationship between the family and capitalism.

What then should we do? Should we make a narrow analysis of female liberation, questioning only the exploitation of women as female workers? Those who think this way do not understand the need to approach phenomena dialectically. Where there is growth and development, they see only immutable objects. Where there is motion and process, they see things frozen in space and time. They feel that to engage in the application of revolutionary theory to new or neglected conditions is to deny the necessity of class struggle. It is not our intention to deny that the essential contradiction underlying capitalist society is that between the mode of production and the relations of production. But as women we understand also that the division of labor within the family was the first exploitative relationship of production and that this condition has not yet been resolved even among men and women of the same class. This conflict has evolved and grown along with the development of class society. We are confronted with a situation rooted in history and facing us today as a full-grown, complex phenomenon, rich and varied in contradictions.

But when the dogmatists hear people speak about female oppression, they begin immediately to talk of class exploitation and the need for class unity. They do not want to hear about the contradictions among the people or to consider that there might be work to do on various levels in developing or bringing about true, revolutionary class consciousness. It is more romantic to set about organizing the working class in an idealist manner than to objectively and painstakingly evaluate the actual condition of the people.

*The task of communists is to expose the fallacies of the reactionaries and metaphysicians, to propagate the dialectics inherent in things, and achieve the goal of revolution. Mao Tsetung*

Jeanne Lafferty

August, 1969



## A WOMEN'S CLASS: THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF IT

Many women in the women's liberation movement are organizing classes. We are such a class. We started out reading, studying and discussing The Second Sex by Simone de Beauvoir. Now we're studying Marxism.

### I. What we study and Why: THEORY

Simone de Beauvoir's book The Second Sex analyses the situation of women in an historical perspective. It doesn't present solutions or even a program of liberation. Rather, it shows how women as a group in society, as a group through history, and each individual throughout her life, has come into the role she assumes and is expected to assume. The book is a basis for an understanding of women; and a thorough understanding is necessary in order to develop a theory for changing society.

That there is something (much) basically wrong with the role we are expected to play as women we knew at the start. The course discussion and the reading helped to show us that despite our very different backgrounds and experiences we all fit into the same category of "women". It cut across class backgrounds, political involvement, marital status, socialization, sex, jobs, school. Because it is so much a part of the social order, rooted deeply in our society affecting and infecting everyone, the society must change radically if women are to overcome the myth of their inferiority.

Thus it becomes necessary to examine theories, analyses and experiences of revolutions. (Revolution: a sudden, radical or complete change). We have to study the basic philosophy and economics of Marxism; we have to study how people went about making revolutions; we have to study what the successful theorists advocated for the "new society" and what it is like today where the revolutions have succeeded. We have to know what the female role was in all of this and what the male revolutionaries thought of her. And we must learn from all the mistakes as well as from the successes so that our struggle shall be the most efficient, most correct possible.

### II. How we do it: PRACTICE

The class consists of half a dozen women. We meet once a week at one of our apartments. Since it is a class,

and discussion is based on material we've been over together in previous sessions, we commit ourselves to showing up on time, every week. We start by stating how much we have read (or haven't read) of the readings for that week. When we were studying The Second Sex, I would prepare questions that covered the essential points. Usually discussion flowed from one point to the next, but when it got stuck I'd prompt it with a question. If most of us hadn't read the assignment the discussion was oriented to cover the material; if everybody had read it (which did happen once or twice) we expanded the discussion to other issues and problems based on the reading. The Second Sex is divided into sections which fit nicely into a 10 week course.

At the end of 10 weeks we decided to stay together and study some more things: specifically Marxism and its relevancy to us. A couple members dropped out. We recruited more by announcing the class at local women's liberation meetings and in the local newsletter and by approaching friends whom we thought might be interested (the same way the original group came together).

Since we must start from the beginning (Marxism being a rather neglected aspect of our education), we are using a syllabus of classical Marxism integrated with material on women and on contemporary movements. The readings are basic Marxist texts of various persuasions. We take turns preparing and leading the discussion. We try to explain to each other what we know and what we have read. We try to constantly test what we are reading and discussing as to its relevancy to the liberation of women.

Kitty Bernick  
October, 1969

*The very idea of adultery disappeared when the patrimony disappeared[ed. Sparta]; all children belonged in common to the city as a whole, and women were no longer jealously enslaved to one master; or, inversely, one may say that the citizen, possessing neither private wealth nor specific ancestry, was no longer in possession of women. Women underwent the servitude of maternity as did men the servitude of war; but beyond the fulfilling of this civic duty, no restraint was put upon their liberty. Simone de Beauvoir The Second Sex*



A kid is a kid because he is what he is in little pieces. He's all broken up like a jigsaw loose in its box. He's just what we make of him and we never make more than we can use, we do what we can to try and make less. Whoever uses the pieces left over or tells him they're there? Whoever tells him that he was born with the whole of a man somewhere in him, but that half of him is never fitted, scattered on the floor?  
*The Inhabitants* by Wright Morris

## DAY CARE CENTERS

You can't talk about women without talking about children; they belong together, nature intended it that way and it's all very beautiful, except for one thing--women aren't going to accept things like that much longer. For thousands of years, pre-capitalist and now, women have been producing children and have been solely responsible for their well-being and socialization. Women, at the expense of themselves as human beings, have had only one valued role in life, that of housewife and child-tender. And no matter how highly valued the job is, the wages have been zero and the conditions intolerable. Dirty diapers, spilled milk, on duty 24 hours, work that would be classed unfit for men. Now don't get me wrong, I'm not against kids; I think they're great--but the situation still remains that there's a hell of a lot of work involved in tending kids, and work that's being done by only half of mankind. A half that's very clearly defined, very clearly decided upon before hand--the female half.

In order to begin to change this situation, the demands for day care must be heard and met. What is meant by day care? Centers providing round-the-clock care for children--not just children who can walk and talk and *don't* wet their pants but infants--newborns. With care that is thoroughly adequate to meet the needs of children of all ages. It must be staffed by men as well as women. The notion that only women know how to care for small children and infants is bull-shit.

Men can and *must* do this work if a change (anything more than a shuffling of mothers and kids) is ever going to take place. These centers must be available to all children, not just those whose moms are working-- and they must be free. It might be described as public education extended down to age zero. (Which may also shed a new view and a little change hopefully into the present public school system.)

How can we make these demands and to whom? First of all, it seems more desirable to have community centered day care rather than having them near a place of work or larger municipal institution. Women shouldn't be made to feel that work is the only valid reason for leaving their kid in the care of others. Community day care makes it part of the people; the community will run it; the community will staff it. If a large corporation is responsible for the center, the people will be made to feel this is a gift, a special benefit given by the company. How can we do this within the community? The facilities of the existing schools are only too convenient; however, many public schools are overcrowded, and completely unfit for human use right now and could never accommodate a day care program. On the other hand, if the Boston area is typical, many schools are being renovated, enlarged, or completely replaced. When this is the case, demands for including day care facilities can be easily made. In the Boston area the possibility of demanding the local colleges and universities to provide day care seems very great. Universities are sopping the rent out of local tenants using the community as a large cheap labor force, and giving almost nothing in exchange. But again it is necessary to warn of the possibility of turning the demand from the community into a gift from the corporation.

Our demands must be clear and precisely worked out; we must know exactly what we want, how many teachers per pupil, what kind of facilities, etc. The community must run the center; the university should provide the money. Be ready, too, to make sure it isn't a lovely setup zoo for the university to practice their experiments in child-development. Churches may also be good places to make demands. As a rule churches are not poor and usually have lots



of unused facilities. In some places they too are eating away at the community around them, and are in a good position to provide day care facilities. One approach in making the demand is to have a very clear outline of what is wanted in the way of a day care--bring the demand to the foreground and let them do the work of setting it all up. Or we can set up a center ourselves with "research" money, private fund money, government money, all of which there is a lot of and then after it is in thorough operation make the demands felt for continuation of the service. The first way means less involvement of women obviously which is ideally the way it should be, but also there is more possibility of being sold out. The second is clearly in the hands of those involved, thus more probably will be what we want for ourselves as women and the kind of place we could send our kids to. But being involved means more work for women, more of the same kind of child tending work we've already been doing. We cannot afford to have "volunteer" organizations; women have been volunteering their time for ages. People must begin to get paid for the care of children.

Now let's get back to those kids. Wow! Listen, kids--liberation is just around the corner! No more moms oppressing you. To quote a few statistics: There are 12 million children in the U.S. under the age of 14 whose mothers are working, almost 4 million of these being under the age of 6. The amount of day care facilities to care for these children you can count on your fingers; the amount that could be considered decent even less. Where are the rest of these children? Many are in the care of another "mother" who is usually unskilled or unconcerned for the welfare of the child. Others are placed in families where the mother already has several kids herself and a few more "don't matter;" she needs a little extra cash. The rest are left alone--in the care of an older sibling or are left with a key to the house strung around their neck.

America seems to think children are born at the age of 5, but kids begin being socialized at age zero, and this socialization must begin *then* with decent surroundings, adequate care and other children to identify with. To be socialized in a group is very

important for the child, where he is part of the group, and is made to feel equal to the rest of the members in that group; where there are enough teachers or socializers to attend to the child's individual needs. The child will be taught by persons from the community who have chosen to care for children, not just women who have come by the job by accident or by fate as we have today. Some deeper thinking and planning must be put into the structure and approach to teaching in these centers. It has already been clearly demonstrated that kids acquire a large portion of their outlook on life before the age of 6. We must think about ways of incorporating cooperative styles of work and play, ones which de-emphasize individual competition and aggressiveness. The kids in this way won't have to feel dependent on their mothers or the private family situation. The doors must be "open" at all times; visitors must not just be welcome, but part of the routine. The elderly must participate. The young and the old have been friends for ages. The reality of youth means so much to older people, and the reality of old age must not be hidden from youth. The separation of the young and the old in our society has been deep and seems only to be getting deeper.

How revolutionary is the concept of day care centers? Is it going to transform the basis of our society from capitalism to socialism? NO. Is it going to transform the material basis of the lives of women? YES. They will no longer, at least, have sole responsibility for the human product--kids. It will free women to act and think independently of children. Is that revolutionary? Ask any woman. Is fighting for day care centers counter-revolutionary? Is it taking good work-people away from the main issue of fighting capitalism? Of course it is. Ask any man. Just because we have day care centers doesn't mean women will not be still oppressed by their husbands, and it doesn't mean women will be allowed decent, creative jobs, at decent wages. And it doesn't mean women still won't feel the responsibility (or feel the guilt) of thinking their kid is in a good or bad situation. But it's part of the beginning.

Judy Raup, October, 1969



## WRITING A LEAFLET

In the early spring of 1969 the desmembered bodies of a number of girls were dug up on Cape Cod. They were allegedly all victims of a man named Antone Costa who lived a hippy style life making friends particularly with young girls and on at least one occasion assisting police with a drug raid.

Every few days during the period of the discovery of the bodies the newspapers would have this screaming headline: "More Slain Girls."

The graves found in the woods around the town of Truro contained arms, legs, heads, and torsos, slashed in the "pelvic region," but often they didn't add up to an integral number of girls. The police then knew that there were more graves with more pieces of girls, and kept looking, with the assistance of the townspeople.

As if this weren't macabre enough, police reported that the flesh had been chewed off the bones on the arms and legs and that the hearts had been cut out of the bodies and were missing entirely.

The papers were full of stories about all this, and women were terrorized. Radcliffe girls invited Harvard boys over for the night to protect them. The Harvard boys were delighted.

The papers reported everything in great graphic detail. They discussed the fact that there were 2000 to 3000 missing females in the U.S. who could have met a similar fate. Everyone recalled other instances like this: Richard Speck and the nurses in Chicago; the Boston Strangler; other female bodies discovered in various woods after being raped, killed, and abandoned by unknown assailants. (Since then there has been the similar reign of terror in Ann Arbor, Michigan, where eight female students were slain in a short time.)

This attitude seemed to us to inspire and reinforce the very thing that had produced it--the psychotic sadism of the murderers. It seemed to us that the psychology of the murderer was very similar to that of the child torturing a small animal--a sick fascination with his power and the other's helplessness. Women's helpless and fearful attitude encourage rape and sadistic murders.

On one level her helplessness and fearfulness attract him in a nonsexual way: he wants to kill someone who he is confident won't fight back. Men are avoided because they usually have the will to fight back and the strength to resist effectively. The exception to prove the rule is the lynching of blacks, who, it was confidently assumed, wouldn't dare fight back. On another level it is a sexual thing, too. Masculine sexuality is measured in terms of conquest. The man overpowers the woman, who "yields" and "is taken."

We thought that this masculine mystique, coupled with women's fearful helplessness, were responsible for the pattern of "slain girls." Roxanne Dunbar and I sat down one night surrounded by the newspaper accounts and full of rage and wrote a leaflet which we then, with others, passed out on the streets. We think it's still topical. Women are still getting raped and slain, still, usually, "with no sign of struggle." They still believe, as they are trained to believe, that their only defense is in helplessness, not in resisting. Maybe he only wants money, or sex, and will not hurt her further if she cooperates. In fact, however, the rapist is a violent person, not someone who is looking for love, and she should not be surprised to find herself beaten and slashed by him; perhaps she will be hurt more because her weakness excites him.

Women should be able to defend themselves effectively. As it is they even lack the will to defend themselves. Most women would rather let themselves be killed than put up a defense and risk killing an assailant. This attitude reveals that they consider themselves less valuable as persons than this vicious, hopeless, criminal.

If women were no longer free game for the weakest, most cowardly pervert, this pattern would be destroyed. If even a few women, once in a while, stood up and fought back, the rapists would think twice. They are looking for certain sick thrills, and these thrills just aren't available from a woman who breaks out of his hold in one spring and drives an elbow into his solar plexus knocking him cold. That isn't positive reinforcement. Soon he won't associate thrills with women any more than he does with men.

Dana Densmore  
October, 1969



## MORE SLAIN GIRLS

Antone Costa's is not an exceptional case. True, disembodied limbs and heads are not discovered daily, but they exist in nearly every man's fantasy. How would it be otherwise given the objectification of women? Constantly we see parts of her--head, breasts, legs. She is the goddess-toy, play bunny to be manipulated--a cut-out doll.

In fact it is not just fantasy. Women are attacked, raped, cut-up, chewed upon, slashed in the "pelvic region," have their hearts removed (and eaten?), strangled, impaled in the vagina with brooms. And the newspapers make more money.

We hear a lot from men about how they have to protect women. From whom? Other women? And if women so much as suggest that they are going to begin defending themselves, the men accuse them of wanting to kill *them*, cut them up. It must be that they have a guilty conscience, recognizing in themselves the pervert they imagine to be after "their woman," and who often is, in fact.

We read in the papers that there are 2000-3000 missing females in the United States, and that there are probably more dismembered bodies planted around Truro.

All this sounds like the lynching of Blacks, though it is universally regarded as merely a natural misfortune. The only lesson to be drawn from the "tragedy" is that women should not venture out unprotected--that is unescorted by a man. Which, in fact, was the rationale of the lynch mob or individual murderers of Blacks--that any "nigger" without a master was free game.

The argument usually given in explanation for sex crimes is that the assailant was probably sexually repressed, had no access to a "normal" relationship with "his own woman." Women are so hungry for love in this sick society that it's not that hard to get "normal" women to go to bed with a man. Almost any man has access to "free" "love" and all men can get it for money.

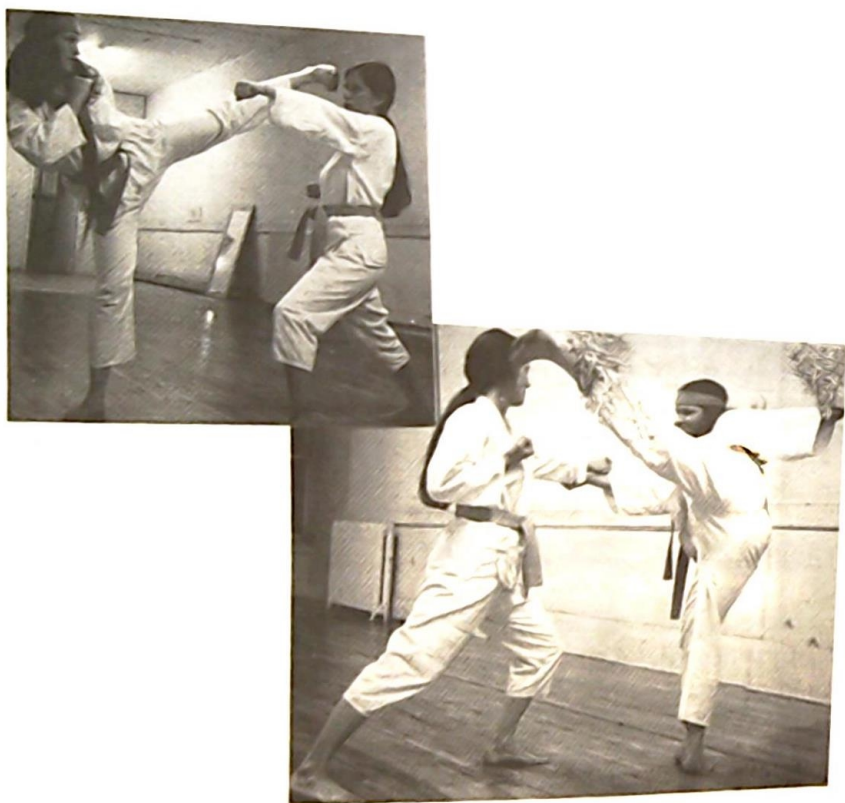
The sex criminals don't want a "normal" relationship with a woman. They want the brutality, the dismemberment, in reality, not just in fantasy.

The guilt is not on women for denying normal outlets to men. The guilt is on society for permitting the objectification of women and the cultivation in men of an attitude of brutality toward women. It is "manly" to "treat 'em rough." Pornographic movies and novels play up to men's sadistic fantasies.

This whole mystique must be destroyed. We must learn to fight back. It must become as dangerous to attack a woman as to attack another man. We will not be raped! We will not be chewed upon! We will not be slashed! We will not be "treated rough" by any man, "brute" or pervert. We will not be leered at, smirked at, or whistled at by men enjoying their private fantasies of rape and dismemberment

WATCH OUT. MAYBE YOU'LL FINALLY MEET A REAL CASTRATING FEMALE.

### Female Liberation





*The following leaflet was distributed at three women's colleges in Boston--Emmanuel, Simmons, and Wheelock--to announce a demonstration of Tae Kwon Do (Korean karate) and to promote discussion and action towards obtaining a free self-defense course for all females--students, faculty and staff--at the three schools. The demonstration was held October 7, 1969.*

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## FEMALES AND SELF-DEFENSE

The ever increasing rate of the traditional crimes against women has prompted women's magazines and newspapers to issue warnings and offer advice to their female readers. We are warned not to go out unaccompanied after dark, but if we must venture out alone, we are advised to carry alarms, mace, nailfiles, to avoid enticing clothing, and of course if attacked--scream, so some passing man will come to our rescue.

The crimes against women are the most blatant expression of the pervasive attitude of men towards women. While some of us have not experienced the extreme, all of us have been subjected to the more "harmless" forms--being handled, whistled at, pinched, hooted at. You don't treat an equal human being like that. Any female not under the "protection" of a male is "free game." If she's not private property, then she's public property.

We have depended on males to "protect" us too long. The right to protect is also the right to oppress. It is time that all females learn to defend themselves.

Males are taught how to take care of themselves while growing up. Females are systematically denied this right. Our culture does not allow women to develop strength. Girls are not supposed to do physical things. The result is that women are pitifully weak. The psychological consequences are of even greater significance. Women feel they *should* be weak, that they need a man to protect them.

Women's physical weakness and its psychological consequences can only be overcome through developing their bodies. Of the various forms of self-defense, karate enable you to become consciously aware of your

physical potential by teaching you to mobilize your whole body. Only when we have gained the self-confidence that comes through developing our physical potential and exercising it, will we be able to gain any individual mobility.

It is a basic and immediate necessity that all women be given access to free self-defense instruction. Individual women should not have to pay to learn how to defend themselves. It is not an individual problem. Women should demand that free self-defense instruction be provided by towns, schools, businesses, welfare departments...all institutions which have direct control over women's lives.

The attacks on women will stop only when it becomes as dangerous to attack a woman as it is to attack another man.

Pat Galligan  
Delpfine Welch







## A FINAL WORD

Why do you find it necessary to spend so much of your letter putting down my ideas - seeking ways to make what Female Liberation has to say appear absurd? If there were no felt cause there would be no emotional support. Your questions seem to follow this line: How are women oppressed? If they feel oppressed it must be that they themselves are the original source for that resentment. Aren't opportunities offered them? Those who can not cope with themselves and others will certainly suffer. Those who can not become as good, as dedicated painters, writers, etc. as men will naturally be forced to acknowledge their inferiority. Art, in its various forms, is sufficiently revolutionary to express, to reveal the truth about men (and women).

It is clear that I can not communicate my ideas to you at this time. First, you must take my anger seriously. Now you can only reject it as a threat to your humane position. It seems as if I had attacked your honesty. You refuse to see that your way of understanding me is one strong factor in pushing me to express this oppression, to react against men.

I do not exist as a "proper" woman. It has always been clear that you accepted this definition of me. Moreover, it is obvious that Julie is young enough, malleable enough to be shaped according to your wishes as I could no longer be molded. In other individual respects, undoubtedly, we are not suited to be a "couple," but this fact does not leave me unaffected. A woman must continually face judgment. She is either "good" or "bad;" and she is so labeled whether she has the position of lover or of friend. Your judgement, despite your intention to accept me as Hilary, determines me to be a functional failure. The "good" woman, the woman used by a man, is allowed to survive happily because she contributes to the sex system. As such a woman, I could be seen to embody some truth, naturally, of a different order than that recognizable in men. If I were your woman friend, I could behave as a more detached and intelligent form of mother. Instead, I am Hilary, who must refer you to her personal history and to analyses other women



have made from their lives; from experience comes the basic consciousness that a revolution is necessary to end woman's supportive role and her derivative knowledge of herself. From her struggle to liberate herself physically and mentally a human revolution to end human exploitation will be made possible.

What is the purpose of your letter? To let me see that a beautiful girl has found a place in your soul? Men are always hunting up ideal women. This title is the special reward pressed on the "good" woman; it reassures other women who are striving to imitate her image that their efforts have some final meaning. The Virgin Mary was extremely useful to the Church in keeping women devoted and faithful to its masculine structure. I don't have any particular awe for the beauty and significance of the bond you assert exists between you as a man and her as a woman. I have lost my envy for a marriage. Godard and Bergman have explained what can be learned from it, and the public's response of boredom to such a film as *The Married Woman* is the most direct proof that it is not necessary to participate in marriage to be an emotionally educated human being.

Love is dominated and manipulated by our culture to sustain its organization of power. To take love seriously as a human emotion, I think you must fight to create mental and social conditions that will allow men and women, blacks and whites to be equal and individual. Now love, tailored to marriage or an affair, only keeps women isolated, dependent and inferior in personality. As there is no possible equality in any presently conceived relationship of woman to man, or in any functioning relation of the people to the controlling class, love must exist as some greater or lesser perversion of human awareness. The bitter flavor of this observation is not the result of my knowing you or any other individual, but is a summation of my total perception of men, beginning with my father, his God and his Reality. It would be incredible for people to be happy, considering how they have been conditioned to live with one another - each trying to hold on to that fragment of privilege, that shred of control allotted him or her in lieu of any actual power over mind

and body.

Finally, you don't respect the experience from which I make my analysis. These thoughts are not pasted on me, as if I were a billboard, displaying slogans. The outlines of these concepts have been emerging since I was seventeen. It is evidence of your lack of trust that I can come to an understanding of my life that is not derived from some authority. Your measurements simply confine me, kindly and surely, to that segregated, man-sustaining ground-floor squatter's camp of the Great American Tenement.

Hilary Langhorst

Never having been sure  
of anything

One wishes  
to be sure  
of just one thing  
or other

A Man  
A Person  
Money  
Position  
Organization

But in fact  
one cannot be sure  
of anything  
Except the necessity  
for change  
And how to do it.

Roxanne Dunbar  
June, 1969





